

Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 4

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Originally published by Bright Star Publishing plc
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

Originally produced by Midsummer Books Ltd
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

This e-edition produced by
www.hitlersthirdreich.co.uk

HITLER'S

Third Reich

Volume

4

Monthly

Witness the terrible secrets of Germany's evil empire

Kristallnacht

Anti-Jewish Pogrom

Blood Purge

Night of the Long Knives

Himmler

Bureaucrat of Murder

Reichsarbeitsdienst

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ISSN 1464-1968



UK £2.95
IR £3.25
Australia \$7.95
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South Africa R24.95
Singapore \$7.95
Malaysia Rgt 17.95
Malta Lm 1.95

HITLER'S Third Reich

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Our thanks to Ulric of England (PO Box 285, Epsom, Surrey KT17 2YJ) for allowing us to photograph items from his extensive collection.

Picture acknowledgments

1: Popperfoto; **2:** Topham Picturepoint, Aerospace Publishing, Popperfoto; **3:** Topham, AKG London; **4:** Topham (two); **5:** Popperfoto, Aerospace; **6:** AKG (two); **7:** Topham, Popperfoto (two); **8:** AKG; **9:** Aerospace; **10:** Aerospace; **11:** Topham, AKG; **12:** Popperfoto (three), Aerospace; **13:** Aerospace (two), AKG; **14:** Aerospace; **15:** Robert Hunt Library, EWWF, Aerospace; **16:** Aerospace (three); **17:** EWWF, AKG; **18:** Aerospace (three); **19:** RHL; **20:** Aerospace; **21:** Aerospace (two); **22:** Aerospace (two), AKG; **23:** Topham, RHL, AKG, Aerospace (two); **24:** Aerospace, AKG; **25:** AKG; **26-32:** Aerospace (all); **33:** Aerospace (two), RHL; **34-43:** Aerospace (all); **44:** Topham, Aerospace (two); **45:** Aerospace (two), AKG, Aerospace; **46:** AKG (two), Popperfoto (two); **47:** Popperfoto (two), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek; **48:** Aerospace (two), EWWF

Published monthly by
Bright Star Publishing plc
179, Dalling Road
London W6 0ES

Produced by Midsummer Books Ltd
179, Dalling Road
London W6 0ES
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Colour reproduction by
Catalyst Publishing, Leamington Spa
Printed in Italy by Officine Grafiche De Agostini

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South Africa: Midsummer Books (Dept.H), Private Bag 10, Centurion, 0046 Telephone: (011) 652 1835 Fax: (011) 314 2984 E-mail: service@jacklin.co.za (please make cheques payable to Midsummer Subscription Services)

ISSN 1464-1976 (with video)
ISSN 1464-1968 (without video)



Hitler and the Doctors

Hitler was a serious hypochondriac, with a pathological fear of cancer. He hated being touched, and favoured quack doctors – as long as they had a convincing manner.



ADOLF HITLER DID NOT drink, did not smoke, and was a vegetarian for much of his adult life. His enemies – Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin – were all hard-living, hard-drinking carnivores, seldom seen without a cigar, cigarette or pipe. Yet it was the clean-living Hitler whose health gave out quickest.

At 55, as the war drew to a close, he looked ten or twenty years older. He shuffled along with drooping shoulders, his left arm and leg prone to uncontrollable spasms. Many observers who saw Hitler in his final year of life had not seen him at close quarters for some time. They were stunned at the speed of his deterioration, and all asked the same question. What had happened to Hitler?

Professor Ernst-Günther Schenck was the medical officer of SS division *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* during 1941-2. Promoted to a desk job in Berlin, he returned to surgical duties in April 1945, working as a surgeon in an improvised operating theatre in the cellar of the New Reichs Chancellery. Introduced to Hitler, he was astounded to encounter such a physical wreck. He noted Hitler's glazed and puffy eyes, his bent spine and shuffling gait. At their next meeting, he saw how Hitler could only keep his left arm still by gripping the table, and how his left leg was twitching constantly.

Addiction or disease?

Schenck was an experienced doctor and he suspected Parkinson's Disease. Worse, by 22 April, Hitler was demonstrating all the symptoms of morphine withdrawal. Hitler's speech was rambling and he was unable to concentrate. Schenck came to the reluctant conclusion that Germany's undisputed leader would be a hopeless cripple within a year, and was already on the verge of senility.

Hitler had a long history of stomach aches, which were probably psychosomatic in origin. A great speech, a bold gamble or an intractable problem was often the trigger for gut-wrenching pains. These were far worse than the gaseous build-ups he experienced even more frequently, and contributed to the fear that he was suffering from the cancer that he had watched kill his mother.

Then Hitler discovered Dr Morell, who could treat the problem with special

Left: How much of Hitler's erratic behaviour in the last years of his life was due to genuine illness and how much was due to the ministrations of Doctor Theodor Morell – seen here with his most famous patient – will probably never be known.



Above: Professor Carl von Eicken was one of Germany's leading ENT (ear, nose and throat) surgeons, who was called upon twice to operate on Hitler's vocal chords.

Below: Karl Brandt was Hitler's personal SS physician. He was also involved in almost every aspect of medical experimentation carried out in the Third Reich: found guilty of war crimes at Nuremberg, he was hanged.



Above: Hitler often suffered from splitting headaches after making speeches, and any doctor who could do something to alleviate the pain – no matter how dubious the treatment – was looked on with favour.

injections: it was, Hitler often stated, a miracle cure. These were an unholy cocktail of stimulants like caffeine and pervitin (similar to benzedrine), probably supplemented by morphine. Two things are certain about the injections: the ingredients were changed as Morell experimented, and the dosage was increased as the war went on.

Other doctors

Morell was not the only doctor to treat Hitler. Carl von Eicken, a Professor of ENT operated to remove a polyp from Hitler's vocal cords in 1935 and had to remove another in November 1944. Examining his patient for the second operation, he discovered Hitler's eardrums had been ruptured by the bomb blast on 20 July. Hitler was unwell for much of that autumn: he had only just recovered from a bout of jaundice, brought on, so he said, by endless arguments with Hermann Goering. Major dental work which followed later that month was not calculated to help Hitler's patience as he insisted on the Ardennes offensive against the advice of his generals. Ironically, considering that it was Morell who had the reputation as a drug-peddler, it was an eminent Berlin doctor who prescribed cocaine-based eye-

drops for Hitler's sinusitis at about the same time. The Führer's valet Linge later admitted he was administering up to ten doses a day early in 1945.

It was with a wrinkled nose and a shudder that Albert Speer recalled meetings with Hitler in the *Wolfsschanze*, the cluster of windowless concrete monoliths hidden in an East Prussian forest which the Führer used as his operational headquarters. Before the war, Hitler had been an obsessive about personal cleanliness. Now, in the heat of summer five years later, the Führer's body odour was overpowering. By the time he withdrew to the Berlin bunker, Hitler had grown careless of his appearance too, and his once pristine grey uniform jacket was spattered with food stains. His teeth were yellow, and his bad breath tested the devotion of his most fanatical adherents.

Assisted suicide

Dr Morell joined the party that fled the bunker on 21 April, escaping on one of the last flights out of Berlin to lie low in Bavaria and await the end. He left Hitler a veritable pharmacy complete with instructions, but it was probably the 34-year old SS Dr Ludwig Stumpfegger who provided cyanide capsules to those bunker residents who wanted them – he swallowed one himself. Morell survived his most famous client by only three years, dying in hospital in May 1948.

Hitler and the Quack

Pills, potions and injections

The diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease has been widely accepted by modern historians, but the true state of Hitler's health is forever clouded by the activities of Dr Theodor Morell. In 1936 the 50-year old Morell was a successful Berlin doctor, specialising in skin and venereal diseases. He contrived to get himself introduced to Hitler via the photographer Heinrich Hoffman, and cured the Führer of a troublesome leg rash.

Whether he capitalised on their shared experiences in the Great War, or simply because he had succeeded where SS doctor Karl Brandt had failed, from that moment on Morell became Hitler's most trusted personal physician.

With the Führer's enthusiastic endorsement, Morell had half the Nazi leadership and their families eager to hire him too. Praising Morell's skills to Hitler was a sure way of currying favour, and Morell profited enormously in the process. He was not above prescribing unlicensed medicines produced by companies in which he had a financial interest.

Brandt and the other doctors attached to Hitler's headquarters were appalled by Morell. At best, he was a quack. At worst, he was a killer. The 'anti-gas' pills he gave Hitler for his excessive flatulence contained the poison

strychnine and he was dishing them out to the Führer with cavalier disregard.

Morell provided Hitler with about a dozen different types of tablet, mainly to address his master's enduring real or imaginary stomach ailments. Most of the pills were harmless – essentially digestive aids and mineral supplements suitable for someone who ate only vegetables and suffered recurrent indigestion.

Others were farcical potions, including one derived from bulls' testicles, supposed to boost a man's potency. To a one-testicled man who had abstained from sex for years, this latter concoction must have had limited value. Perhaps it contributed to the ever more violent tantrums with which Hitler greeted bad news as his health declined.

Right: Theodor Morell was a fashionable Berlin doctor specialising in treating venereal and skin diseases. His treatments were – to say the least – questionable.

Below: Doctors were an ever-present part of Hitler's entourage. SS doctor Karl Brandt (fourth from the left) is seen here at a meeting of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, where military rather than medical advice would have been useful.





Kristallnacht

Night of terror for Germany's Jews

The night of 9/10 November 1938 saw the German state unleashing an anti-Jewish pogrom of medieval ferocity.

JEWS IN the Germany of the 1930s knew what it was like to be persecuted. Harassed and attacked in the streets and deprived of basic civil liberties,

they were the targets of Nazi oppression from the moment that Hitler came to power. But even they were surprised by the ferocity of the pogrom known as *Kristallnacht*, which broke out in November 1938.

The anti-Jewish riots were on a scale unmatched in Germany since the Middle Ages. Sparked off by Nazi stormtroopers, the pogrom became a conflagration involving hundreds of thousands of ordinary Germans, though few could have known that the roots of the events lay in the bitter territorial rivalry between Germany and Poland.

Antisemitic rivals

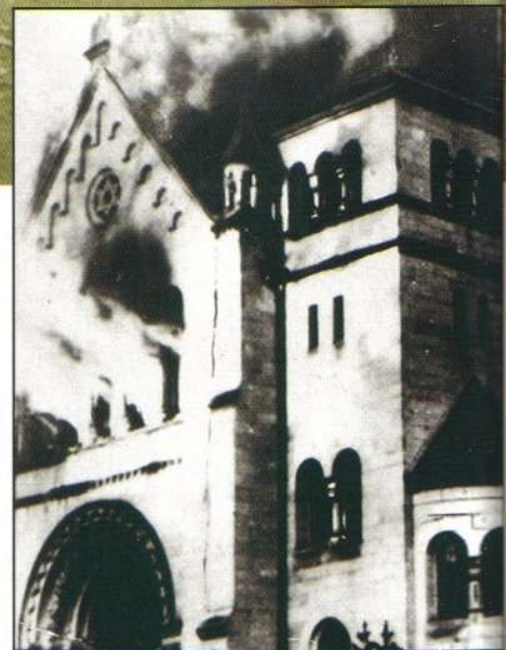
But for its heroic resistance against both the Nazi and Soviet regimes during World War II, Polish antisemitism might have come under closer and more searching scrutiny by post-war historians. Persecution of Jews had been as virulent in Poland and Russia as in pre-Hitler Germany or Austria.

In the 1930s Marshal Pilsudski's government saw an opportunity to rid Poland of at

least 50,000 Jews at the stroke of a pen. Poland had regained its independence in 1918, having endured some 150 years of Russian rule. Unfortunately, Allied determination to punish Germany for World War I led to large swathes of German territory being included in the new Polish state. Most controversial was the transfer of the wealthy industrial area of Silesia ("like giving a monkey a wristwatch", said British Prime Minister David Lloyd-George). It

Above: On the morning of 10 November, 1938, the German people woke up to the sight of shattered glass. It was scattered on the pavements of almost every town and city in the country.

Right: With the shattered glass came the smell of smoke and ashes. More than 70 Jewish synagogues burned after arson attacks planned by the Gestapo and carried out by Stormtroopers.



was almost inevitable that Germany would seek to recover its lost lands, with Silesia being the primary target. From the mid-1920s Germany and Poland were engaged in a 'Cold War', with army exercises on both sides of the border concentrated on how they would fight one another.

In March 1938 the Polish government passed a law that would deprive Poles of their citizenship if they had lived outside Poland for five years. The intention was to denaturalise the 50,000 Polish Jews then living in Germany.

At this time it appears that Hitler was still planning to drive the Jews out of Germany rather than exterminate them, and his response was to order the immediate deportation of all Polish Jews. The Gestapo went to work, rounding up families and transporting them to the border. The Poles refused to receive them, and the unfortunate people were herded into insanitary camps along the border: stateless refugees.

Lighting the spark

Hershel Grynszpan was a seventeen-year-old Polish Jew, living in Paris. When he heard what was happening in Germany – that his parents, resident in Hannover since 1914 had lost their home, their livelihood and were now in one of the camps –

he decided to make a spectacular protest. Arming himself with a revolver, he went to the German embassy on 7 November, intending to shoot the Ambassador.

Talking his way inside, he shot Ernst vom Rath, actually a secretary and, ironically, an anti-Nazi already under investigation by the Gestapo. Grynszpan was arrested. Vom Rath lingered between life and death until succumbing to his wounds on the afternoon of 9 November.

At that moment Hitler was in Munich, at a meeting of Nazi leaders. Goebbels, after a brief private conversation with him, stepped up to the podium.

The murder of vom Rath, he announced, had sparked anti-Jewish rioting in Kurhessen and Magdeburg-Anhalt. The Führer, he continued, had decreed that if the rioting spread, it was not to be discouraged.

Not for the first time, Hitler kept his distance while a major Nazi atrocity was poised to take place. He gave no public order and signed no document, but his was the responsibility: no Nazi leader would have dared unleash the SA on the Jews without Hitler's sanction.

At least two Nazis did put their name to documents that make plain the Party's role. Heinrich Müller instructed Gestapo offices to liaise with

EUROPEAN ANTISEMITISM

A Long, Dark tradition

Anti-semitism has existed in Europe since the Middle Ages. Inspired by the Church, Jews became targets for Christians because "they had killed Jesus". More often, however, they were attacked simply because they looked different, spoke a different language, and were easy scapegoats for anything which had gone wrong in society.

However, towards the end of the last century a new kind of antisemitism arose. This fed on envy at the obvious commercial and financial success of one

sector of European Jewry, who had emerged from the ghettos in the previous century and a half. Anti-semitism was given a pseudo-scientific respectability by the turn-of-the-century writings of people like the Frenchman Arthur Comte de Gobineau and the Briton Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

Antisemitism was rife all though Central and Eastern Europe, but only in National Socialist Germany did it become one of the driving forces of a modern state.



Above: Jews are made to clean the streets in Vienna with their hands, watched by Austrian SA and SS members. The Nazis were following a long Central European tradition of antisemitism.



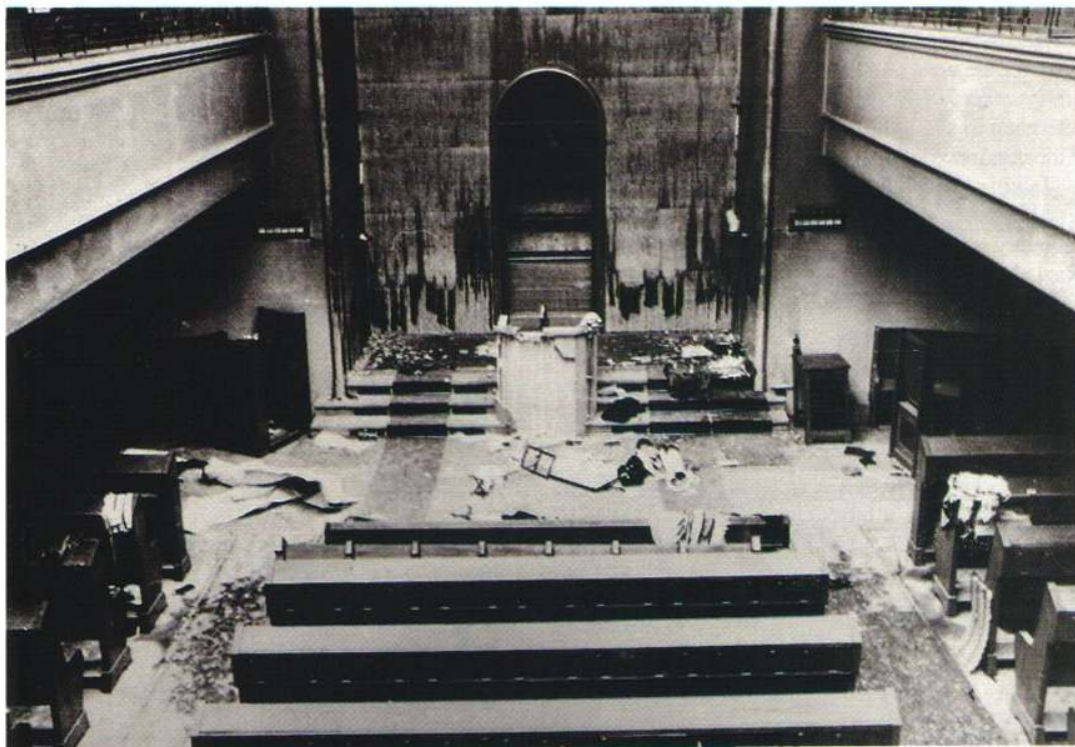
Above: From the moment Hitler came to power in 1933, the heat was on for Germany's Jews. Even in that first year the SA was calling for a boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.



Left: Most German schools were anti-Jewish even under the Weimar Republic, but when Hitler came to power anti-semitism became a part of the school curriculum.



Above: SA Stormtroopers parade to whip up anti-semitic frenzy following the murder of a German diplomat in Paris.



Left: Synagogues were prime targets for the rampaging Nazi mobs. More than 1,000 were attacked and damaged more or less severely, with nearly 200 being completely gutted by fire.

local police to ensure that Jewish properties were destroyed, but not looted (which would be criminal, after all).

His orders came from Reinhard Heydrich who at 1.20 A.M. on 10 November sent a telegram from Munich to all police and SD headquarters, "regarding measures against the Jews tonight". There was at least a nod towards international opinion: "foreigners", he ordered, "even if they are Jews, are not to

be attacked".

It became known as *Kristallnacht* or 'Crystal Night', because the next morning streets and sidewalks all over Germany were covered with broken glass. The rioting spread from the Rhineland to East Prussia within hours – news travelling suspiciously fast for that pre-television era. What began as scattered local disturbances by SA toughs, snowballed into a nation-wide pogrom on a scale

not seen in Germany since the middle ages.

Once it became clear that the police had been ordered to stand aside, that the authorities were giving carte blanche to beat, rape or kill Jews, gangs of like-minded thugs felt free to attack Jewish homes, business and synagogues.

Counting the cost

By the morning of 10 November 191 synagogues had been gutted by fire; 76 of them were subsequently demolished. One hundred and seventy-one Jewish-occupied apartment houses had been burned down; some 7,600 Jewish-owned businesses had been looted and destroyed.

The human cost is harder to quantify. There were 236 deaths, including 43 women and 13 children. About 600 people were seriously injured and thousands more suffered beatings of

varying severity. The rapes were covered up, although for different reasons. According to Nazi ideology, no Aryan should sully himself with Jewish flesh. Five men were expelled from the Nazi Party for violation of the Nuremberg racial laws – not for the crime of rape, for which they received no punishment at all.

Twenty-two Germans were arrested for trying to stop the violence. They were charged with interfering with lawful demonstrations.

More oppression

In the wake of *Kristallnacht* the Nazis intensified their anti-Semitic policies, prohibiting Jews from theatres, cinemas, and even park benches. 'Gestapo' Müller ordered his men to target wealthier Jews for arrest. More than 20,000 were taken into custody, and only released on payment of heavy fines. But many could not afford the fines and never were released. They were despatched to Buchenwald concentration camp where they were treated abominably, and around 8,000 died.

There were over a million men and women on the streets that night, many drawn by the burning synagogues which proved an irresistible spectacle. But the horror of the pogrom spread far beyond the major towns and cities.

In one village, near the Polish border, a Jewish widow and her young children were selected to be the victims. They had only lived in the village for seven years, and did not receive the 'protection' of longer-established Jewish families. Rebecca Feld and her children were put on a truck and driven towards the border by two local policemen. The villagers then burned down her house and small grocery store, watched by the police and local officials.



Left: The Ark and the bimah (the platform where the rabbi and the cantor normally stand) from the synagogue at Zeven were dumped in the town square. The sign, suspiciously well-printed for a spontaneous event, reads "Revenge for the murder of vom Rath! Death to the Internationale, Jews and Freemasons!"

Insurance Scam Enriches the Nazi Party

Profiting from mob violence

It was apparently intended that the family would be dumped in woods just over the frontier, but one little girl would not stop screaming. The policeman's patience snapped somewhere along the road, and he hit her. She fell from the truck and was killed.

The Felds survived in Poland until July 1941 when German troops entered their village; Rebecca hanged herself, but one son escaped to join the resistance, surviving the war to provide this depressing close-up of *Kristallnacht*.

Foreign reaction

The spectacle of a medieval pogrom in a supposedly civilised European nation aroused international outcry. In America, where anti-Semitic prejudice had kept some conservative elements in favour of Hitler, condemnation was universal. The German ambassador in Washington gloomily reported that the Hearst newspaper empire was now hostile, so was J Edgar Hoover and the FBI. The next week, President Roosevelt lambasted the Nazi regime at a press conference. Hitler took little notice. His ignorance of the United States would forever blind him to the danger of poisoning relations with the world's most powerful industrial economy. Even Ribbentrop, never noted for his perspicacity, realised what effect *Kristallnacht* would have on public opinion in England.

Hershel Grynszpan was never brought to trial. Charged with murder, he was still languishing in jail when France surrendered in June 1940. The Gestapo deported him to Germany but abandoned plans for a public trial after Grynszpan claimed he had had a sexual relationship with vom Rath. No evidence of his final fate has come to light. He is presumed to have been executed later that year.

The crimes against property committed on *Kristallnacht* were easily quantified, not the least because German insurance companies were going to have to pick up the 6 million mark bill. Goering exploded with rage when the consequences were explained: for the German insurance industry to refuse payment would undermine its international credibility. It was apparently Heydrich who suggested the obvious: allow the payments to proceed, then confiscate the money anyway.

The Nazis decreed that the Jews were to blame for the murder of vom Rath, and fined the Jewish community a billion marks. On 12 November, in the wake of the pogrom, Hermann Goering chaired a meeting of senior Nazis. Attendees included Goebbels, Heydrich, chief of the central office of the SD Kurt Dalwege, Minister of Economics Walter Funk and Minister of Finance Schwerin von Krosigk. It was here that the plan was hatched to confiscate the insurance payments to the pogrom's victims.

The minutes of the meeting shed an interesting light on Nazi attitudes at that time. Goering stated that if it came to war, Germany would deal first, not with whichever European powers were against her, but have a "showdown with the Jews".



Above: On the direct instructions of Reinhard Heydrich, German firemen were instructed to let the synagogues burn. They were only to go into action if there was a danger of fire spreading to neighbouring non-Jewish property.



Above and right: More than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses were looted and destroyed on the 'Night of Broken Glass'. The total value of the insurance payouts for replacing the glass alone was around six million Reichsmarks, but the actual cost of the damage was much higher.





The 'Army of Labour' gathers at the NSDAP's Nuremberg rally to celebrate the Nazi reverence for the working man.

Reichs arbeits dienst

Adolf Hitler's 'Army of Labour'

The massive National Socialist 'make work' programme designed to eliminate unemployment in depression-hit Germany.

ONE OF THE many spurious Nazi claims made in the pre-war years was that Hitler and the Party had put the nation back to work, solving the unemployment problems that had plagued Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. Before he came to power Hitler had promised that he would overcome *Arbeitslosigkeit* or unemployment.

'Make-work'

German men, and later women, were indeed employed under National Socialism, but it was not true productive labour: in fact, the unemployed were cogs in an a vast uniformed 'Make Work' project.

Like many achievements claimed by the Nazis, it was not even original. The Weimar Republic had actually taken the first steps towards setting up a state sponsored labour service. It

was a way of solving the employment problem, just as in the USA President Franklin Roosevelt introduced the New Deal which put unemployed men back to work on major projects such as the Hoover Dam.

The *Reichsarbeitsdienst* was established by a law promulgated on June 26, 1935, and Hitler chose Major Konstantin Hierl to lead it. Hierl had been Hitler's commanding officer in the Army Political Department in Munich after World War I, and the Führer always showed loyalty to his oldest comrades. It was Hierl who in 1919 had tasked Hitler with penetrating the tiny German Worker's Party (DAP) – the organisation which his spy was to take over and which would eventually become the nucleus of the Nazi Party.

Men aged between 19 and 25 were conscripted for six months into the RAD, a period which was considered a valuable toughening process before



military service.

The first annual contingents of around 200,000 men were organised into two units, each working for six months. By September 1936 Hitler could boast that the jobless total had fallen from 6 million to 1 million.

Since many farm labourers had moved to cities in search of jobs, most of the men called up for the RAD were assigned to agricultural work. Life on the farm was tough and the regime had a strict disciplinary code. The RAD put the men into barracks and made no distinction between its members. Manual workers, artisans, students and intellectuals undertook common tasks, bombarded by slogans celebrating ideals like *Blut und Boden* – Blood and Soil. The iconography of the RAD included a shovel bearing a swastika on the blade, flanked by two ears of corn.

Manual labour

William Shirer, a not uncritical observer of the Third Reich, wrote that, in many cases, "it did no harm to a city boy and girl to spend six months in the compulsory Labour Service, where they lived outdoors and learned the value of manual labour and of getting along with those of different backgrounds".

Under the direction of the civil engineers and construction experts of the Todt Organisation the RAD were part of the programme that built the *Reichsautobahn*. The Autobahn, Europe's first four-lane motorways, are widely seen as a creation of Hitler's Germany. In fact the first, between Cologne and Bonn, had been completed in 1932 – a year before Hitler became Chancellor. Hitler ordered the speeding up on

Right: Although Hitler was brought to power by the support of a variety of elements, including big business and the army, many Nazi ideologues saw the movement's natural home as being among the German workers. As a result, Party propaganda turned the German worker into a heroic figure.





**"We plant trees. We build streets.
We give the farmers new acres.
For Germany"**



construction work and 30,000 workers were assigned to the task. The numbers eventually reached 70,000, but only a quarter of the planned 11000 km of road had been completed by the outbreak of war.

Relics of the Reich

A rather bizarre reminder of the RAD work programme was discovered following the reunification of Germany in 1989. The German government discovered that a vast tract of mature woodland in former East Germany had been planted by the RAD. In the centre of the dark green woodland, picked out in trees with leaves of a lighter colour was a huge swastika, covering about 4,000 square metres of forest!

Women served in their own labour organisation. Initially known as the German Women's Labour Service, it was renamed the RADwJ or Reich Labour Service for Young Woman. It was set up in 1934 as a voluntary organisation, but only attracted 1,000 girls. Like the RAD the idea was not original. In 1932 the German Protestant churches had proposed the idea of women undertaking patriotic labour which would break down the barriers of class and religion.

Under the vigorous leadership of Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, the Reichsfrauenführerin, the German Women's Labour Service took over the Protestant Women's Organisation in 1936. In turn it was taken over by the RAD leader Konstantin Hierl and became the RADwJ.

In January 1939 the voluntary facade for the RADwJ was dropped and all women under 25 were required to undertake a year's service. By 1940 there were 200,000 girls working in agriculture. For the girls it was known as the *Land Jahr* or Land

Left: The Führer takes the salute. Konstantin Hierl (nearest the camera), hand-picked by Hitler to lead the RAD, was a senior Party bureaucrat who had been Hitler's commanding officer in Munich in 1918 and 1919.

TRIUMPH OF THE WILL

Art, Propaganda and the Reichsarbeitsdienst.

Year. Others performed domestic duties as servants in a 'Household Year'.

It was not a comfortable experience. Based in one of 2,000 camps or in temporary accommodation, they worked for seven hours a day on German farms. The small number of families who understood how to work the system arranged for their daughters to work for friends or relatives as 'domestic help' or 'nursemaids'.

Senior Nazis initially believed that women were incapable of running an organisation as big as the RADwJ. But German women, it emerged, were more than capable of running work camps, and Paula Siber of the Women's Section at the Ministry of the Interior wrote:

"Outside of the family, there is no feminine occupation which so epitomises a self-contained environment and a demand for the utilisation of all feminine energies as that of a woman camp commander".

Women in control

Camp schools, district schools and the Reich School of the RADwJ were established. Their function was not only to groom hand-picked RADwJ members for positions of responsibility, but also to train professional women – doctors, lawyers and teachers – for specialised jobs in the Reich Labour Service.

The female leaders of the RADwJ were presented as the embodiment of new German womanhood. "They were trained in Spartan severity, taught to do without cosmetics, to dress in the simplest manner, to display no individual vanity, to sleep on hard beds, and to forgo all culinary delicacies; the ideal image of those broad-hipped figures, unencumbered by corsets, was one of radiant bloneness, crowned by hair arranged in a bun or braided into a coronet of plaits".

Unlike their male counterparts in their stylish paramilitary uniforms, the girls of the RADwJ

With shovels carried like rifles, lines of men chant like a Greek chorus. "We stand here. We are ready." A roll-call shows that these men represent all of the main *Gau* or districts of National Socialist Germany. The chant resumes – "Ein Volk. Ein Reich. Ein Führer. We plant trees. We build streets. We give the farmers new acres. For Germany."

The organisation which was celebrated in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will) was the RAD.

A long section of the powerful documentary film of the Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg in September 1934 focussed on the newly established regimented band of labourers, the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* or RAD.

In the film, slow music follows the roll-call, flags are ceremonially lowered and the RAD men shoulder their spades. Hitler watches with "grimly benevolent concentration" and then addresses the men.

"Earth and labour unite us all. The entire nation goes through your school. Germany is happy to see her sons marching".

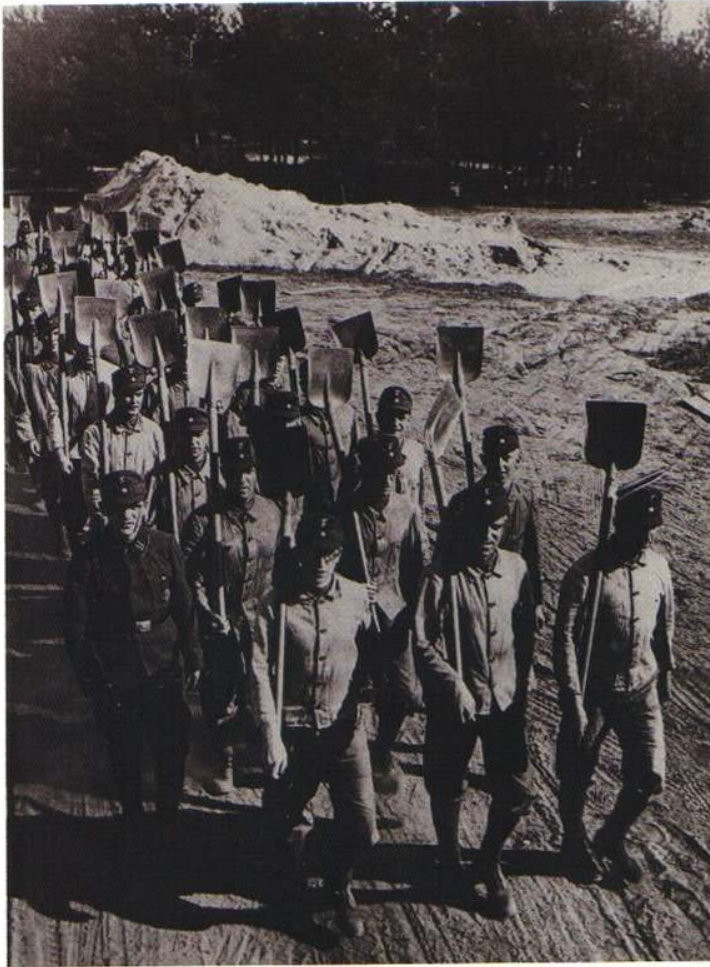


Above: Spades polished to a bright glitter and carried like rifles, the men of the Reichsarbeitsdienst march past the Führer after pledging their allegiance at Nuremberg. Their oath was to Adolf Hitler, to the National Socialist German Worker's Party, and to the Fatherland.

Left: The Party rallies honoured a variety of organizations, but the Labour Service event was one of the most important of them all. This is why it plays such an important part in Leni Riefenstahl's classic propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*.

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INSIDE THE THIRD REICH



Above: Every able-bodied man in Germany was liable to serve in the ranks of the Reichsarbeitsdienst, for at least a six- or nine-month period before being called up for military service.

Below: RAD labourers build an Autobahn in an idyllic Alpine setting. In winter such work – and the tented camps that were the only accommodation – would have been a tough experience.



Above: The RAD was an egalitarian organisation, where a man was valued by the amount of work he could do. These are university graduates and undergraduates who have been called up to dig a new drainage system.

Below: Gertrude Scholtz-Klink was the head of the female branch of the Reichsarbeitsdienst. Pretty much self-appointed, she was a devoted follower of the Führer, who continued to support his memory long after the end of World War II.



wore a jacket, white blouse, a long dark skirt and a rather shapeless hat. It may sound a rather unalluring outfit, but despite this, “moral problems soon arose” on the farms and in the households.

“The presence of a pretty young town girl sometimes disrupted a peasant’s household, and angry complaints from parents about their daughters having been made pregnant on the farms began to be heard... Similar moral problems also arose during the Household Year”.

There were other temptations. William Shirer noted that “...usually a girl’s camp was located near a Labour Service

camp for young men. This juxtaposition seems to have made for many pregnancies too. One couplet – a take-off of the ‘Strength through Joy’ movement of the Labour Front, but applied especially to the *Land Jahr* of the young maidens – went the rounds of Germany:

*In the fields and on the heath
I lose Strength through Joy”*

Rebellion

For the puritanical leadership of the Third Reich, service in the RAD and RADwJ ensured that young men and women were kept busy and not corrupted by decadent fashions or American ideas. The high life and American dance crazes enjoyed

UNIFORMS

AND INSIGNIA

during the brief period of economic stability in the Weimar Republic were considered to be outward manifestations of an inner rottenness which produced the Wall Street Crash and the Depression. In turn, the Depression was a time when unemployed young men hung around in groups on the streets.

There were dissenters from this ideological ideal of state sponsored group youth activity, mostly among the middle classes in the larger cities. In 1941, 500 girls and long-haired boys gathered together in a 'swing festival' at the Alsterpavillion in Hamburg. *Swingjugend* groups sprang up in other cities – for example, Frankfurt had the Ohio-Klub and the Cotton-Klub.

Neither the young men nor the women liked the Hitler Youth, BdM, RAD or RADwJ, said an SD report on 'juvenile demoralisation', because these state-sponsored groups encroached on their free time. The *Sicherheitsdienst* report concluded, "Their ideal is democratic freedom and American laxity"

Oppressing youth

Anywhere except the Third Reich such behaviour might have been a cause for concern, but hardly a crime against the state. The Nazi solution to the problem came in orders from State Secretary Gutterer to SD chief Reinhard Heydrich, authorising police raids on the clubs and a round up of the young men. In 1940 the 88 girls and 72 boys of Frankfurt's OK-Gang and Harem Klub, which had existed since 1939, were cleaned out in police raids.

After a period of hard physical labour with the RAD the young men were sent to the Todt Organisation for more of the same treatment. Service to the state, which had begun as a means of curbing unemployment, had become a form of punishment for youthful high spirits and rebelliousness.

As with any organisation in the Third Reich, the RAD had a uniform. It consisted of a khaki tunic and trousers, mustard khaki shirt and black tie with marching boots; in service dress the men wore a rakish forester's cap with a white metal RAD badge. In working order the cap was replaced by a side cap. The men had a military style leather belt with white metal buckle. Officers wore a Sam Brown belt, shoulder straps, breeches and riding boots.

The RAD unit insignia appeared on the left sleeve of the tunic, the badge showing the spade blade pointing down and showing unit's number. A standard red, black and white swastika arm band was worn immediately below. As with the armed forces, rank was displayed on the tunic collar and epaulettes.

As with many organisations in the Third Reich, senior RAD men were entitled to wear a ceremonial edged weapon. The RAD version was a broad bladed heaver with a horn grip and the motto *Arbeit Adelt – Work Ennobles* – engraved on the blade.

Senior members of the RAD who had served in World War I could wear their military decorations, while many of the young men, fresh out of the Hitlerjugend would have sports badges. However the RAD had its own medals and decorations. The *Dienstauszeichnungen für den Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Long Service Awards of the State Labour Service) were awarded in four classes, with different configurations for men and women. The women's version was worn as a brooch hanging from a bow and featured a swastika supported by two ears of wheat. Men wore a medal with the shovel and wheat motif. The awards were bronze for four years service, silver for 12, silver with a silver eagle on the ribbon for 18, and in gilt metal with a gilt eagle on the ribbon for 25 years service.



Above: Rank insignia for an RAD 'Arbeitsführer'

Below: Woven insignia: a sports badge for an athletics vest (left) and a unit/area arm patch as worn by other ranks and NCOs.





Night of the Long Knives

“How can you have a revolution without firing squads?”

Lenin

DIE NACHT DER lange Messer – The Night of the Long Knives – has the kind of dramatic style characteristic of the fertile mind of Joseph Goebbels. It was the term coined to describe the events which consolidated Adolf Hitler’s hold on the Nazi Party and on Germany – the bloody purge of the Führer’s SA rivals on 30 June 1934. Goebbels was a late-comer to what began as a conspiracy against Hitler’s old comrades, and turned into a general settling of scores.

Like most of the propaganda chief’s statements, it was an inversion of the truth. Most of the killings took place during the day, and were carried out with pistols and sub-machine guns. The number of dead – estimates range from 80 to as many as 1000 – was tiny by comparison with Hitler’s later crimes, but it set the stage for the complete subjugation of Germany. In the wake of this massacre, Hitler would declare himself literally above the law of the land. And all Germany cheered him for it.

In the spring of 1934 Hitler was still obliged to govern with some respect for constitutional niceties. Although he had

The Stormtroopers of the SA had been the Führer’s strong right arm in his rise to power. But now, with power achieved, the sprawling mass of street fighters and bully boys was becoming an embarrassment.



STORMTROOPERS: THREAT TO HITLER



Left: Ernst Röhm was a charismatic leader, who had taken the SA to unimagined heights. But his ambition to use the SA to replace the army as Germany's sole armed force frightened his fellow Nazi leaders.

Above: In many ways, Adolf Hitler owed his rise to power to the SA – the streetfighters who were ideal in the violent politics of Germany in the 1920s. But now he was in power, they needed to be curbed.

In the three years since his return from exile in Bolivia, Ernst Röhm had expanded the SA to a strength approaching 4,000,000 men. It was widely feared as a 'state within a state', as it flexed its muscles at larger and larger parades and demonstrations. Röhm was in the cabinet, as Minister without Portfolio, but never concealed his contempt for the whole system of government. He publicly advocated a 'second revolution', claiming that with the capitalists still

in control, the Nazi revolution was incomplete. He envisaged the SA as the true spirit of the National Socialist revolution, a genuinely popular armed force that should replace the regular army and the aristocratic officer corps that commanded it.

It was Hitler's opposition to Röhm's military ambitions for the SA that had led to the latter's resignation in 1928. Hitler needed the SA and the crowd of beery hooligans Röhm had recruited, but he wanted

them to crush the communists and other opponents in street fights, not to arm and equip a force that might panic the army into a pre-emptive strike against the Nazis. The Reichswehr generals were delighted to watch the SA brutalise left-wing demonstrators, but would not stand by while Hitler (or anyone else) assembled a paramilitary organization capable of a Munich-style putsch on a national scale.

demanding and received totalitarian powers, his regime was not yet fully established. Hitler was still vulnerable to a firm move by President Hindenburg or the army. Hitler was determined to succeed Hindenburg as president: and it was essential that no rival candidate – perhaps one of Hindenburg's favourite generals – be allowed to emerge. All Germany knew the president was ailing; at 87 years old he was poised to retire to his estates for the summer, probably never to return to the capital.

To achieve a smooth succession, Hitler had to travel a little further along a tightrope of his own making. For five years he had maintained a precarious equilibrium between the left-

wing, avowedly socialist elements of the Nazi party, and the bankers, industrialists and senior army officers. Without them government, let alone German re-armament, would be impossible. Soon, Hitler would have to choose between the men who had dedicated their lives to his struggle, and the plutocrats who were prepared to support him for their own short-term selfish interests.

Prominent among those old comrades who stood in Hitler's way was Ernst Röhm, *Stabschef*

Right: Hitler assured President Hindenburg that he would bring the SA under control. He had to – otherwise the ageing Field Marshal might unleash the army on the Stormtroopers, bringing the Führer's plans to nothing.



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Above and right: The army was one of the strongest pillars of German society, and Hitler needed its support to consolidate his grasp on power. At least for the moment, the generals had all the trump cards, but the Chancellor could win them to his side by promising to expand the military and planning a major rearmament. However, the biggest sticking point was the position of Röhm and the SA, who the army wanted muzzled.



of the SA. Röhm had spent two years in exile as a military adviser in Bolivia, but was invited back by Hitler at the end of 1930. Hitler needed Röhm's undoubted brilliance as an organizer, and knew he could rely on the passionate loyalty of this brutal, battle-scarred pedester.

Röhm's recruiting and organising skills quickly bore fruit: so quickly, in fact, that the

authorities reacted against the expansion of the SA, banning the wearing of paramilitary uniforms in late 1931. Nevertheless, the SA grew to an intimidating size, smashing communist resistance exactly as Hitler had planned.

Paradoxically, it was Hitler's victory in January 1933 that doomed Röhm and his cohorts. As Chancellor, Hitler was now seen incongruously dressed in top hat and tails, consorting with

the very class enemies the SA leadership had sworn to wipe out. The organisation became restive, vocal in its demands for more revolutionary measures, and it was not long before loose tongues attracted the attention of the most sinister of Hitler's followers.

Reinhard Heydrich, head of the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst* or SS security service) kept files on everyone, especially other

leading Nazis, which may have played a part in his own death in 1941. He compiled a dossier on the SA: it made for fascinating reading.

Threats to Hitler

In their cups, Röhm and his henchmen criticised the Führer in the crudest terms, damning him for selling-out to the capitalists; many senior SA figures joined their leader in all-male sex orgies. Hitler was perfectly aware of Röhm's sexual orientation, and had hitherto exercised an unusual tolerance, once he was assured that it was men and not boys that shared Röhm's bed.

Heydrich informed his ambitious chief, Heinrich Himmler – whose whole SS organisation was itself a branch of the SA. He also informed



Left: Hitler's first cabinet included people with links to the old ruling classes and to industry. The Führer needed their support along with the Army, and once again Röhm and the SA, with their plans to redistribute wealth, were the big problem.

Rivalry among Hitler's Henchmen

Hermann Goering, who appointed Himmler chief of the Prussian Secret State Police Office – Goering's grandly titled assassination squad that Himmler would transform into the Gestapo.

Goering loathed Röhm. They shared a predilection for thuggery and murder, but with his aristocratic connections, the venal, greedy and vigorously heterosexual fighter ace was the antithesis of Röhm, the homosexual bar-room brawler. Also, as the only leading Nazi who was received by Berlin society, Goering was most sensitive to the political current in the governing classes.

Army opposition

The generals had heard Röhm's demands to merge the army and the SA – with Röhm at its head. In February, Hitler had already had to warn Röhm publicly and make him sign an agreement with General von Blomberg, formally restricting SA activity. Wider public opinion was unhappy at the posturing antics of the Brownshirts. President Hindenburg, leaving Berlin for his estates, conscious he was going home to die, confessed to Papen that 'things are going badly'.

Hitler summoned Röhm to a meeting at 7.00 pm on 4 June. They talked long into the night. Whether Hitler genuinely sought to avert a terminal breach with Röhm, or was merely lulling him into a false sense of security remains a mystery. Hitler was an opportunist, but he was equally capable of the most machiavellian long-term planning. The upshot was that Röhm ordered the SA to go on leave for a month. He himself would take a break at the spa town of Bad Wiessee.

On 21 June, Hitler visited the ailing Hindenburg, who sat gruffly in a wheelchair with General von Blomberg doing most of the talking. It was a short meeting, just four minutes by one



Röhm and the SA were at the root of the Nazi's waning popularity. Coming to power amid a tide of anti-communist emotion, Nazi promises to restore order to Germany were being overwhelmed by the swaggering, roistering behaviour of the Brownshirts.

Like Frankenstein's monster, the SA plainly had a mind and agenda of its own. So Goering, Heydrich and Himmler, who all stood to lose power if the SA came out on top, fabricated evidence of a planned SA coup d'état.

There is no evidence that Röhm and his men actually planned a coup – at least for the moment. But they had talked about it often enough, and the army and the public suspected such a plot was on the cards. One SA *Obergruppenführer*, Viktor Lutze, had overheard Röhm call Hitler a traitor and said of the revolution, "If we can't get there with him, we'll get there without him".

Above: As minister for Prussia, Hermann Goering controlled the Secret Police (later the Gestapo). He loathed Ernst Röhm, whom he saw as a rival for power, and it was not long before he had the Gestapo working on the SA leader's downfall.

Below: Röhm had also alienated Heinrich Himmler, whose SS was officially part of the SA. While Goering went to work in Prussia, Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich (second from right) began to manoeuvre against the SA elsewhere in Germany.





Above: Hitler was one of the first politicians to use aircraft as a regular means of transport. On the Night of the Long Knives, he commandeered a Lufthansa Ju 52, which enabled him to swoop down on the SA leadership without warning.



Left: Sepp Dietrich (in uniform) was commander of Hitler's bodyguard, the Leibstandarte SS. He was tasked with carrying out the actual detaining of the SA leadership, but at the last minute the Führer decided to make the arrests in person.

account. The general threatened to order martial law, to bring the army on to the streets and deal with the SA.

That would be a body blow for Hitler's authority. He remembered only too well how the army crushed his attempted

coup in Munich. If it came to a fight, the army would dispose of the SA with ease, and destroy national socialism in the process: Germany would be ruled by the army. Hitler spun on his heels and flew back to Berlin.

The next morning he called

"Adolf is rotten. He's betraying all of us. He only goes around with reactionaries. His old comrades are not good enough for him. So he brings in these Prussian Generals. They're the ones he wants to be friends with now."

Ernst Röhm, Drunken conversation reported to Hitler by the Gestapo early in 1934

Lutze to the chancellery and declared that Röhm had to go. Hitler then promised General von Blomberg that he would suppress the SA leadership. Whether Röhm's fate would be expulsion from the party, exile or something more drastic, Hitler was undecided. But Himmler and Göring knew. Röhm's fate was sealed by Heydrich's report: a vile brew of mutinous talk and unnatural vice that would bury the SA once made public.

Old scores

The conspirators had other targets in their sights too. The purge of the SA would be the cue for a cold-blooded massacre of

Right: Viktor Lutze was a senior SA commander who wanted to be much more. As a reward for siding with the Führer against his comrades, he became Chief of Staff after Röhm was murdered.

the Nazis' political opponents.

Heydrich and Himmler informed the army of a threatened putsch by the S.A. Military units went on the alert all across Germany. Significantly the SS was reported to be on the army's side, and orders were passed that SS men needing extra weapons could draw them from military bases.

Himmler waited until Thursday 28 June. Hitler was out of the capital, at Essen to attend the wedding celebrations of one of his gauleiters. Then he telephoned a string of fabricated reports, news that sent Hitler into a towering rage. Goering, who was with him, fanned the flames until he got Hitler's permission to fly back to Berlin in readiness to behead the SA. Hitler called Röhm and said he would speak to the SA commanders on Saturday 30 June. Röhm was actually pleased, believing the Führer's visit to their conference was a gesture of public support for the Brownshirts.

Hitler spent Friday night at a hotel in Bad Godesberg, and ordered Sepp Dietrich, leader of his SS bodyguards, to descend on Bad Wiessee and arrest Röhm. But after more false reports from Himmler, including one that the SA would launch a coup d'état the following afternoon, Hitler decided to do it



himself. He commandeered a Junkers Ju 52 airliner and took off shortly after 2 am.

Hitler was only accompanied by a small entourage: his bodyguard Emil Maurice, his 19-year-old secretary Crista Schröder, drivers Julius Schreck and Erich Kempka, Joseph Goebbels, Rudolf Hess, adjutants Wilhelm Brückner and Julius Schaub, and a few plainclothes police officers and SS men – and the Judas of the SA, Viktor Lutze. Nevertheless, Hitler was in such a blind fury that when he landed in Munich he did not wait for the following aircraft, packed with SS men. He leapt into a Mercedes and ordered Kempka to head for the Ministry of the Interior.

The purge begins

There, a little after 4 am, he summoned the two most senior SA men in the city, and arrested them the moment they arrived. The bewildered Brownshirts were hustled off to Stadelheim Prison, where an SS firing party was waiting.

Sepp Dietrich had assembled and armed over a thousand SS men at the Cadet School barracks at Lichterfelde, Berlin. Some flew to Munich to assist Hitler at Bad Wiessee, the rest awaited the signal 'Kolibri' (hummingbird).

Hitler's party drove immediately to Bad Wiessee where the SA had hired a small pension. There were no sentries, no indication that this was the headquarters of an imminent coup. They were all in bed. Röhm was woken by someone knocking at the door of his room. Hitler marched inside, gun in hand. 'Ernst,' he said, 'you are under arrest'. The astonished SA chief was told to get dressed, and continued to protest his innocence as Hitler rapped on another door. Inside, 37-year-old *Obergruppenführer* Edmund Heines was discovered in bed with another man: his young driver. Hitler exploded. Stamping and screaming at them, he

demanded their immediate execution. The lovers were dragged outside and shot.

Röhm and his surviving minions were thrown into jail in Munich, where they were joined by other local SA leaders rounded up by Rudolf Hess. Hitler called Goering in Berlin and gave the codeword.

'Kolibri' triggered a St Bartholomew's Day massacre in Berlin. Goering and Himmler organized the arrest of the SA leadership in the capital. They were taken to the Cadet School barracks at Lichterfelde and shot in droves, many still dumbly protesting their loyalty to the Führer. Goering's death squads murdered former chancellor General von Schleicher and his new wife, shooting the couple down in front of their 14-year-old daughter. His associate General Bredow was gunned down too. The 73-year-old Gustav Ritter von Kahr, the man who had crushed the Beer Hall putsch nine years previously, was dragged from his home and beaten to death.

Marked for death

The death list included vice-chancellor Franz von Papen, who had recently spoken out against the regime. The silver-tongued von Papen talked his way out of it, but his speechwriter was tortured by the Gestapo, then shot. Gregor Strasser was shot in an adjacent cell, and another man who knew too much, Father Bernhard Stempfle was abducted and killed. The truth of Hitler's relationship with his niece Geli was buried with him.

Röhm sweated in his cell throughout the following day, hoping his Führer would save him. But at 6 pm on 1 July he was handed a newspaper announcing his arrest—and a revolver loaded with a single bullet. Röhm refused to commit suicide and was shot by SS-*Gruppenführer* Theodor Eicke, Inspector of concentration camps.

Commander of Hitler's Private Army

Ernst Röhm had no place in the new Germany that Adolf Hitler was creating. A fighting man who had performed with distinction during World War I, he was typical of many men attracted to the Nazi party in its early days. His existence had been moulded by experiences in combat, and he was ill-suited to settling down in civilian life.

Röhm needed action. It did not really matter who he was fighting – just so long as he was fighting. Communists, pacifists, Jews – anybody. This attitude was ideal for the rising Nazi party.

However, by the time Hitler came to power, it was clear that Röhm had as little time for capitalists, Prussian aristocrats and the hierarchy of the regular army as he had for his earlier enemies.

It may be that Hitler shared

those views. But Hitler was a consummate dissimulator, and as long as he needed those people he would hide his thoughts. Röhm was blunt almost to the point of naivety, a man who took pride in saying what he thought.

So it was inevitable that Röhm, the beery homosexual with a loathing for sophistication, culture and manners, would fall out with Hitler, a man who was trying desperately to gain control of the reins of power by cultivating just such "old farts" as his SA chief regularly attacked.

Below: The stocky, thickset, scar-faced Ernst Röhm was the antithesis of Adolf Hitler. A promiscuous homosexual with his own ambitions for power, it would not be long before he fell foul of Nazi rivals conniving in his downfall and death.



HEINRICH Himmler remains one of the most enigmatic of the bizarre figures who reached the top in the Third Reich. Yet the man

who was responsible for making the Final Solution possible could not stomach executions, and suffered from psychosomatic illnesses including headaches and hysteria.

Born near Munich on October 7, 1900 he was the son of a schoolmaster, a former tutor to the Bavarian Royal family, and was brought up in a devoutly Catholic home. His service as a cadet clerk at the end of World War I gave him a taste for keeping records. He would later apply this skill to build up dossiers on potential rivals within the Nazi Party. He joined the party in its early days and participated in the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 at the side of his mentor Ernst Röhm – the future leader of the SA who would be murdered by the SS.

In 1925 Himmler became acting Gauleiter in Lower Bavaria, and from that year until 1929 he worked as propaganda leader of the Party.

In 1928 he married 35-year-old Margarete Boden, and they set up a poultry farm near Munich. His wife encouraged his cranky ideas about homeopathy, mesmerism and herbalism; it was onto these harmless enthusiasms that he would graft a more sinister fascination with racial purity.

SS COMMANDER

In 1929 Hitler appointed him head of the 300-strong *Schutzstaffel* – the SS. From its original position as Hitler's bodyguard within the SA, the SS would grow to encompass the all-embracing security apparatus of the Third Reich, the concentration camps, an industrial empire and a private army half a million strong, organised into 35 combat divisions

By the time the Nazis came to



Heinrich Himmler

CRACKPOT MASTER OF THE SS

A born bureaucrat, Heinrich Himmler more than anybody else translated the ideas and dreams of Adolf Hitler into the true horrors of the Third Reich.



Above: The 23-year-old Himmler carries a swastika banner during the Beer Hall Putsch. He had an almost religious belief in the destiny of Adolf Hitler.

Left: At the height of his influence, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler was probably the most feared man in Germany. Yet like all of Hitler's henchmen, he was completely subservient to the Führer.

power in 1933 the SS had expanded to 5,000. Its role in the Night of the Long Knives on 30 June, 1934 consolidated the SS and Himmler's position. In three days, the black-uniformed men of the SS eliminated Hitler's rivals in the leadership of the SA and the left wing of the party. The German Army, which had seen the SA as a threat, watched the SS purge the opposition and foolishly saw Himmler's blackshirts as a political ally.

On June 17, 1936 Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler took control of the unified German police service. He was already head of the police in southern Germany, but now his fiefdom included the Prussian *Geheime Staatspolizei* - the Gestapo, which would eventually allow him to control almost everybody in Germany.

In the years before the war the SS embraced a wide and very varied range of activities - and with the onset of war these expanded dramatically. Himmler was made *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* - Reich Commissar for the Consolidation of German Nationhood - in October 1939. It was in this role that he directed

the SS in their genocidal operations against 'racial degenerates' which included Jews, Poles and gypsies.

After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Himmler was given responsibility for the political administration of the occupied territory. As resistance increased to German occupation throughout Europe it was the Gestapo, SD and SS who led the efforts to suppress or destroy it.

FINAL SOLUTION

At the Wannsee Conference, which took place in Berlin on 20 January, 1942, a group of SS officers and government officials under the chairmanship of SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich drafted what was known as the Final Solution of the Jewish problem. This was the blueprint for the destruction of European Jewry. Most of the killing would be undertaken by SS men (and some women) in labour and extermination camps set up in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

By now, the SS had become an empire within an empire inside the Third Reich, running its own tax-exempt industries and moving funds into Switzerland.

Using slave labour at the concentration camps the SS was able to negotiate lucrative deals with German armaments

Bureaucrat from Hell

Organiser of the 'Final Solution'

Heinrich Himmler was the architect of the Final Solution. His SS state within a state were the standard bearers of the Nazi racist dream, deciding who was aryan and who was not. Through Reinhard Heydrich he controlled the Gestapo, the SD and the Police, which were used to track down Jews all over occupied Europe, rounding them up into ghettos before their final disposition. He controlled the *Totenkopfverbände*, the 'Death's Head' guards established to run the concentration camps and who as a natural development ran most of the extermination camps. He controlled the *Einsatzgruppen* and the police battalions who shot millions of Jews in the former Soviet Union. Himmler was also the biggest user of slave labour in the Third Reich, via the *Wirtschaft- und Verwaltungshauptamt* - the SS Economics and Administrative Department, which ran the organisation's extensive economic interests. All these organisations reflected the character of their leader - a natural clerk, Himmler insisted that each stage of the horrific process of exterminating Europe's Jews should be recorded in tedious detail. So much was written down, in fact, that in spite of attempts to destroy the evidence at the end of the war that enough remained to hang the surviving perpetrators.



Above: Himmler examines plans for the slave labour camp to be built at IG Farben's Buna synthetic rubber plant near Auschwitz. Himmler was the executive arm of Hitler's 'Final Solution'



Left: As head of the SS, Himmler was de facto head of security for the National Socialists. This gave him a privileged position right next to his master on great Nazi Party occasions.

Right: Himmler and his wife Margarete were similar characters, being thrifty, neat and hard-working. But their marriage was troubled: Himmler in fact had a mistress by whom he fathered two children.



Left: Himmler at a Berlin police shooting range. At the left is Kurt Daluge, head of the uniformed police. In the centre is Erhard Milch of the Luftwaffe. Third from the right is Reinhard Heydrich of the SD.



manufacturers. The average life of a labourer in a camp was nine months - by which time the SS had profited by around 1,500 marks from his or her work.

In August 1943 Himmler was made Minister of the Interior, and used the position to strengthen his grip on the civil service and courts. Following the 20 July Bomb Plot in 1944, Himmler became the second most powerful man in the Reich. On July 21 the Hitler made him supreme commander of the *Ersatzarmee*, the Replacement Army which provided reserve troops for the fighting fronts.

HIMMLER THE GENERAL

It was from this organisation that the *Volksgrenadier* divisions were created in time to fight in the Ardennes offensive at the end of 1944. There were about 50 such formations, which were half the strength of a normal infantry division but which had increased

automatic fire power from new weapons like the StG 44 assault rifle and considerable tank-killing capability with one-shot *Panzerfaust* weapons.

Himmler reached his military zenith when in late 1944 he was given command first of the Army Group Upper Rhine, and then in January 1945 of Army Group Vistula, which faced the Russians. This would have been a challenge to an experienced general, and it was overwhelming to a man whose sole military experience had been as an officer cadet-clerk at the end of World War I. Out of his depth in facing the massive power of the Red Army, he retired to a nursing home, leaving command to his deputy.

As Allied and Soviet troops entered the Reich Himmler was tasked with organising *Werewolf* - Operation Werewolf, a resistance movement behind the lines. Commanded by SS-

Obergruppenfuhrer Hans Pruetzmann, *Werewolf* was not an effective force, despite its sinister title.

Since 1942 Walter Schellenberg of the SD had been urging Himmler to contact the Allies to attempt to negotiate a surrender. In 1945 Himmler realised that the war was lost and contacted Count Folke Bernadotte of Wisborg, a Swedish Red Cross official. Himmler was by now so out of touch with reality that he suggested that the release of female Jewish detainees in concentration camps could be used as a bargaining tool in negotiations with the British and Americans.

News of the SS leader's dealings reached Hitler in his Berlin bunker two days before his suicide. Outraged that *treue Heinrich* - loyal Heinrich - should desert him when all of Germany was falling into ruin,

the Führer ordered Himmler's arrest for treason.

Following Hitler's death, the provisional government of Admiral Dönitz realised that Himmler's presence in north Germany was a liability. On 21 May 1945, Himmler shaved off his moustache and adopted the identity of Heinrich Hitzinger - a dead village policeman - and left his headquarters at Flensburg. He apparently hoped that he would be able to disappear among the displaced population on the move on the crowded roads in Germany.

HIMMLER'S END

Detained at a British check point at Bremervorde he was examined by a British Army doctor. Convinced that he had been discovered, Himmler's nerve failed and he crushed a vial of cyanide concealed in his mouth. Unlike millions of his victims, he died instantly.

The SS – Himmler's Teutonic Knights

Heinrich Himmler took command of the SS in 1929, at a time when it was very much in the shadows of the SA. Few thought that the quiet, bespectacled, apparent nonentity would be able to do much to change the situation. But Himmler had ideas for his new command.

As an avid student of Germanic history, Himmler had been enthralled by stories of the Teutonic Knights, who in the 14th and 15th centuries, had spread German culture among the Slavs to the east. Himmler wanted to create a new order of Teutonic Knights to continue the job: an order to match his romanticised ideals of the Germanic race.

His first step was to raise enlistment standards, weeding out some of the street thugs who had been in the organisation from the beginning. The new SS members would be supremely fit, with unblemished Germanic ancestry going back three generations, and above all, to be as obedient and loyal as a Jesuit (but without the Jesuit habit of asking awkward questions).

Soon the SS was an elite within the Nazi Party, and Himmler had the platform on which to build his perfect state within a state.



Above right: By the time of the mass party rallies at Nuremberg, the SS had created its own image: part of, but distinctly separate from, the SA. It had been formed as the Führer's bodyguard, and loyalty to Adolf Hitler remained one of the principal characteristics of the organisation.



Above: Heinrich Himmler poses with the senior leadership of the SS soon after the Nazis came to power. Ten years later, after a massive expansion, such a group would have needed a conference hall to pose in.

Above: The Armed or Waffen SS was formed in the 1930s, and grew during World War II into an army half-a-million strong. The original Waffen SS units were elite troops, though their fanaticism meant they were prone to taking excessive casualties. However, that fanaticism meant that they were also rather more prone to committing atrocities than other military units.



Left: The SS was Hitler's Praetorian Guard, and like Guards units in all countries, it had a ceremonial function as well. Immaculately turned out members of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler were on parade at all state occasions, with a full ceremonial complement of bands and drummers.

Himmler the Mystic

In any other situation, Heinrich Himmler's ideas would have labelled him a crackpot. But in the mad world of the Third Reich, the immense power of the Reichsführer and his SS enabled the bespectacled bureaucrat to indulge in his taste for esoteric mysteries. This was in spite of the fact that Hitler often ridiculed 'loyal Heinrich' for his beliefs.



HIMMLER copied out his favourite gobbets from the Bhagavad-Gita, one of the episodes of the Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. He told his physiotherapist Dr Felix Kersten that he never travelled anywhere without them. According to Kersten, Himmler fused pagan Nordic beliefs with Hindu concepts of reincarnation, and was developing a neo-pagan 'religion' that would replace Christianity throughout the Reich after the war.

To Himmler, Adolf Hitler was a manifestation of the supernatural: a God become flesh and blood as Vishnu is believed to do 'for the protection of good, the destruction of evil and the establishment of righteous laws'. To Kersten he quoted the legend that wherever lawlessness arises, 'I will be born anew'. It was the Karma of the German people that Adolf Hitler had come to save

them. Whether Himmler aired this idea to Hitler himself, Kersten does not relate.

REINCARNATED KING

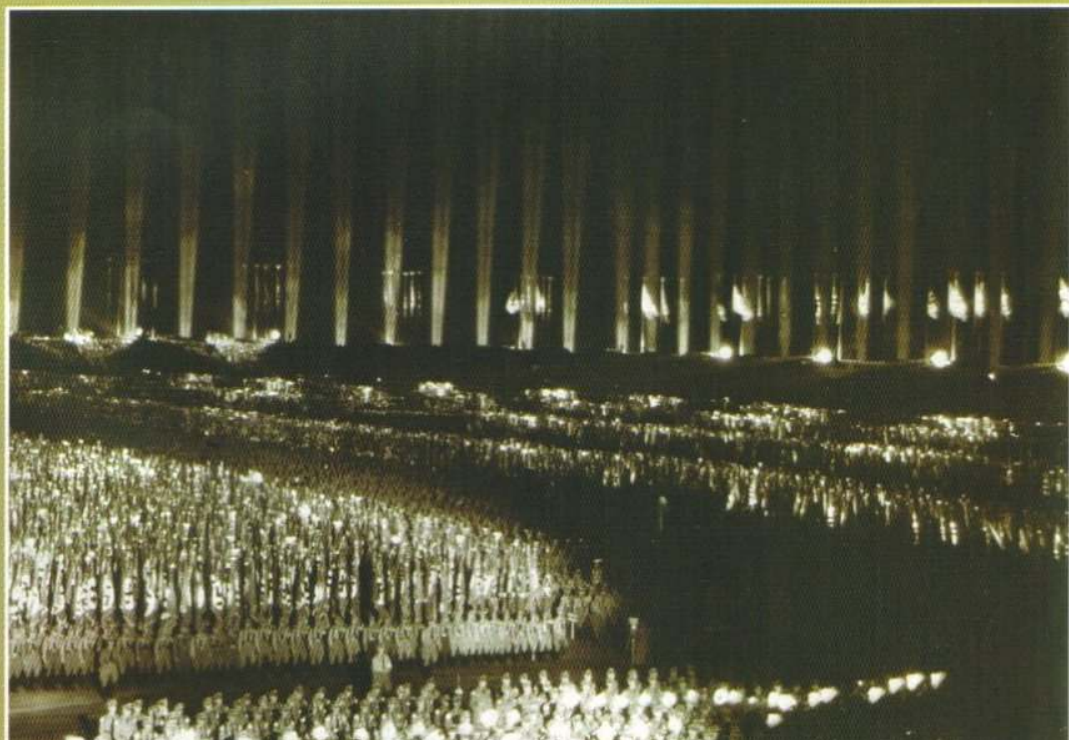
Himmler told some of his closest associates that he had a special personal relationship with the ninth century Saxon king Heinrich I, known as Henry the Fowler. Indeed, he thought that

he might be the reincarnation of the victorious German monarch who had defeated the Slavs. Himmler instituted an annual commemoration of the king, and limited himself to a dozen dinner guests, following the example of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

Himmler recruited a number of academic cranks to provide an

intellectual foundation for his pagan philosophy. Under the leadership of SS-*Sturmabführer* Wolfram Sievers and SS-*Oberführer* Professor Dr Walther Wüst, the *Ahnenerbe Forschungs und Lehrgemeinschaft* (Society for Research and Teaching of Ancestral Heritage) studied the history of early Germany. It was

Right: Pagan fire rituals were a major part of SS and Nazi celebrations. The largest such occasions saw torches and bonfires replaced by searchlights.





Left: Himmler salutes the tomb of Henry the Fowler on the 1,000th anniversary of his death. The Reichsführer identified with the Saxon king: he may have even have thought himself a reincarnation of his hero.

Right: One of the many magazines of Germanic folklore and myth which appeared in Munich after World War I. It was material like this which inspired the young Heinrich Himmler.

their obsession with blood purity which helped to inspire the *Lebensborn* project. They fired Himmler's imagination with tales of 'superstitions and supernatural phenomena from Germany's ancient, brooding forests.

DEFLOWERING MAIDENS

Much of their 'research' merely pandered to Himmler's voyeurism. Himmler involved himself in a long correspondence with his 'experts' on the alleged ancient custom whereby nubile village girls were deflowered across a stone table on the ancestral burial site. The villagers stood in a circle facing outwards, so the sex act could be observed only by the spirits of the ancestors – and presumably the SS 'research team' in the bushes.

A child so conceived was said to be born 'of the stone', and the practice sustained the race when there were too many women and not enough men for all to be married. Married couples who sought to conceive were said to have sex on the same stone at the time of the new moon. Professor Wüst wanted to undertake further research into the folk tale that women were at their most fertile during the time of the new moon.

At the eleventh hour Himmler's faith in his leader's supernatural origin faltered. Hitler effectively vanished from sight in 1944-45, leaving Goebbels as the public face of Nazism, and Himmler wielding more power than anyone. Himmler allowed his physiotherapist to talk him into releasing a group of priests from the concentration camps. 'Do you think these priests will pray for my soul after I am dead?', he

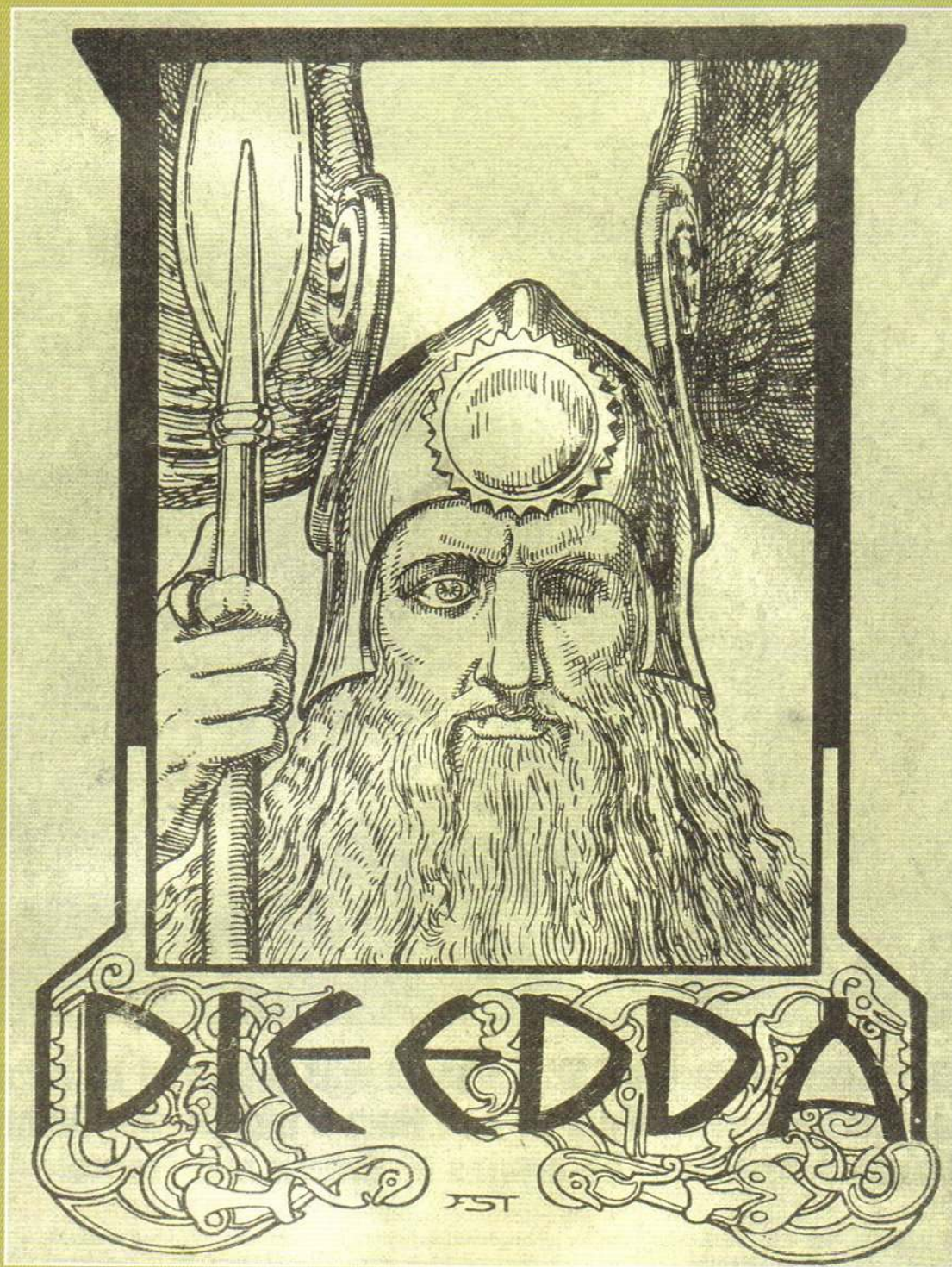
asked Kersten.

Himmler left behind a mountain of paperwork, but few clues as to his real convictions. He once tried experiments with telepathic contact – a group of SS officers striving to communicate by thought-waves with a subject in an adjacent

room. He devoted considerable time to ancient folklore, but preferred stories of sex in the woods to legends of the arcane. Only his belief in reincarnation seems to have been sustained, perhaps because it provided a psychological shield.

Like the Spanish Inquisition,

Himmler's SS claimed divine sanction for its bloody inhumanity. For Himmler, his terrible crimes were actually his divinely-inspired duty. He was naturally squeamish, and famously lost his lunch after watching a mass execution in Poland.





BATTLE OF

Germany's attack on Scandinavia was followed by an even more devastating campaign. In less than a month, the Wehrmacht's fast-moving Panzers smashed the armies of Britain and France.

“

W

AR,” declared Adolf Hitler, “is for man what childbirth is for woman”.

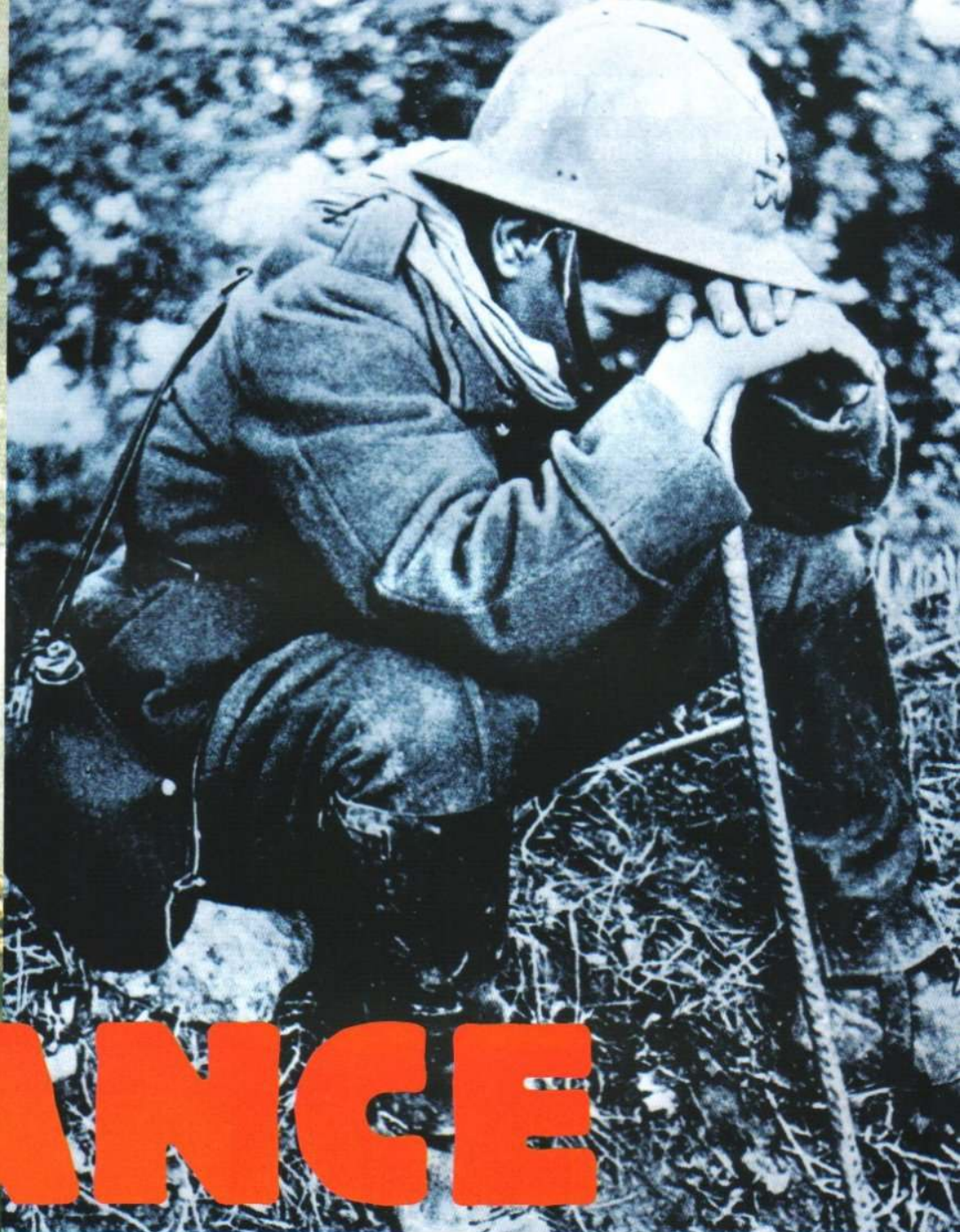
It was not only natural, an integral part of the human experience – it was a duty. “As a boy,” he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, “I longed for the chance to prove that my patriotism was not mere talk”.

But for all his devotion to duty and the unquestionable bravery under fire that won him an Iron Cross First Class in 1917, Adolf Hitler was never promoted beyond corporal. He treasured the medal to the end of his life; it was often the only decoration on his tunic. He also kept a front-line soldier's cynical regard for the generals, the bewhiskered, monocled

aristocrats who had presided over four years of carnage on the Western Front.

The former corporal became head of state with the passive endorsement of the German army high command, generals whose contempt for the Weimar regime exceeded their distaste for Hitler and his vulgar, lower-class Nazi movement. He stamped his authority on the

generals by engineering dismissal of the minister of defence, Field Marshal von Blomberg, whose second wife's past career as a pornographic actress was exposed by Goering's agents. The army's favoured successor, von Fritsch was then arrested on false accusations of homosexuality. But until the invasion of France and the breakthrough at Sedan,



FRANCE

Above: German light tanks pound through a French village, relying on speed rather than gun power to disrupt French defences.

Above right: A beaten French poilu graphically shows the low state of morale in the French Army.

Hitler shrank from telling the generals their job.

In September 1939, Hitler unleashed his forces against Poland, leaving no more than a covering force in the west to face a French army of 70 divisions, supported by 3,000 tanks and with complete air supremacy – but only if the *Armée de l'air* had been ordered to fight. Hitler's intuition that the French

would do nothing paid off. The huge French army sat still, while a small British Expeditionary Force was shipped to northern France.

THE SHOOTING STARTS

The 'Phoney War' lasted through the winter and into the spring, until German forces invaded Denmark and Norway, forestalling an Allied landing by a matter of days. It was not until 10 May, eight months after the outbreak of war, that Hitler sent his armies west.

The last time German soldiers had poured into France, in 1914, their initial drive had taken them

close to Paris. But they were driven back, and had to endure four bloody years of trench warfare. This time they would break the back of enemy resistance in a single week.

Within a fortnight, the British would be evacuating their soldiers, and France would be at Hitler's mercy. The humiliation of 1918 would be avenged – and it would be the Führer's master strategy that did it, not the General Staff.

The original army plan for the invasion of western Europe was based on Germany's opening attack in World War I, but was actually less ambitious than the

Schlieffen Plan of 1914. The generals intended to occupy Belgium and France's northern industrial regions but no further. They had no intention of repeating the ill-fated march on Paris they tried in 1914. The army high command believed that the ratio of forces and the power of modern defence admitted no other strategy; new objectives would require a further campaign in 1941.

The German generals were not alone in thinking that this was how it would be: the French and British generals agreed too, drawing up plans to push their main mobile forces into Belgium

HITLER'S BATTLES 4



the moment hostilities began.

Had the attack been delivered when first ordered in autumn 1939, the generals would have had the war they planned. But Hitler had other ideas. He had fought in Belgium, among the shattered villages around Ypres where a million British and German soldiers were killed in 1917. He knew the ground, how artillery bombardments reduced the ground to a quagmire. Countless small rivers and streams offered endless obstruction to an invader. Surely it would be better to attack further south, perhaps through the forested hills of the Ardennes? The generals looked down their noses at the idea.

CHANGE OF PLAN

By the time the postponed offensive was ready to roll in the spring, Hitler discovered that at least some officers shared his vision. General Erich von Manstein was chief of staff to General von Rundstedt, commander in chief of Army Group A in the West. Manstein had studied the Ardennes region

Right: The Ju-87 Stuka added the devastating psychological effect of screaming sirens to the pinpoint accuracy with which they could deliver bombs. The Stukas worked closely with the Wehrmacht, taking the place of artillery support for the fast-moving German panzers.



and come to the same conclusion as the Führer. He discussed the idea with the Germany's most influential tank expert, General Heinz Guderian. They argued for a radical strategy: to rush German panzer divisions along the narrow forest tracks and out onto the gently rolling hills of

northern France. Bursting into open country they would punch through the enemy before the defences were ready for them.

It would be difficult to bring enough artillery with these fast moving formations, and other German commanders envisaged a pause while the guns were



Left: Civilians and soldiers alike take shelter in a ditch as a Staffel of Stukas attacks a busy road in northern France.

Below: Although the panzers provided the sharp spearhead of the German attack on France, the bulk of the troops involved – 37 out of 44 divisions in von Rundstedt's Army Group A – were infantry.



28 HITLER'S THIRD REICH

Around the Maginot Line

The ultimate fortification proves to be a waste of time and money

brought forward; a World War I-style battle would then take place along the river Meuse. Guderian and his tank men were far more sanguine, confident they could storm the French defences. The Luftwaffe's bombers, especially its fearsome Ju-87 'Stuka' dive-bombers, would provide close support in place of artillery.

Hitler adopted the Manstein plan and changed the orders to his commanders in the west. Manstein would receive due credit in time, but the orthodox generals resented having a relatively junior officer's plan thrust upon them, and posted von Manstein to command an infantry corps in the rear.

One thing Hitler could not change was the odds. Although Germany enjoyed superiority in the air, with 4,000 aircraft against 3,000 Allied, the Wehrmacht had only 141 divisions with which to attack 144 Allied divisions. The Allies had some 3,383 tanks compared to the German total of 2,335 – many of these being light tanks of limited fighting capacity.

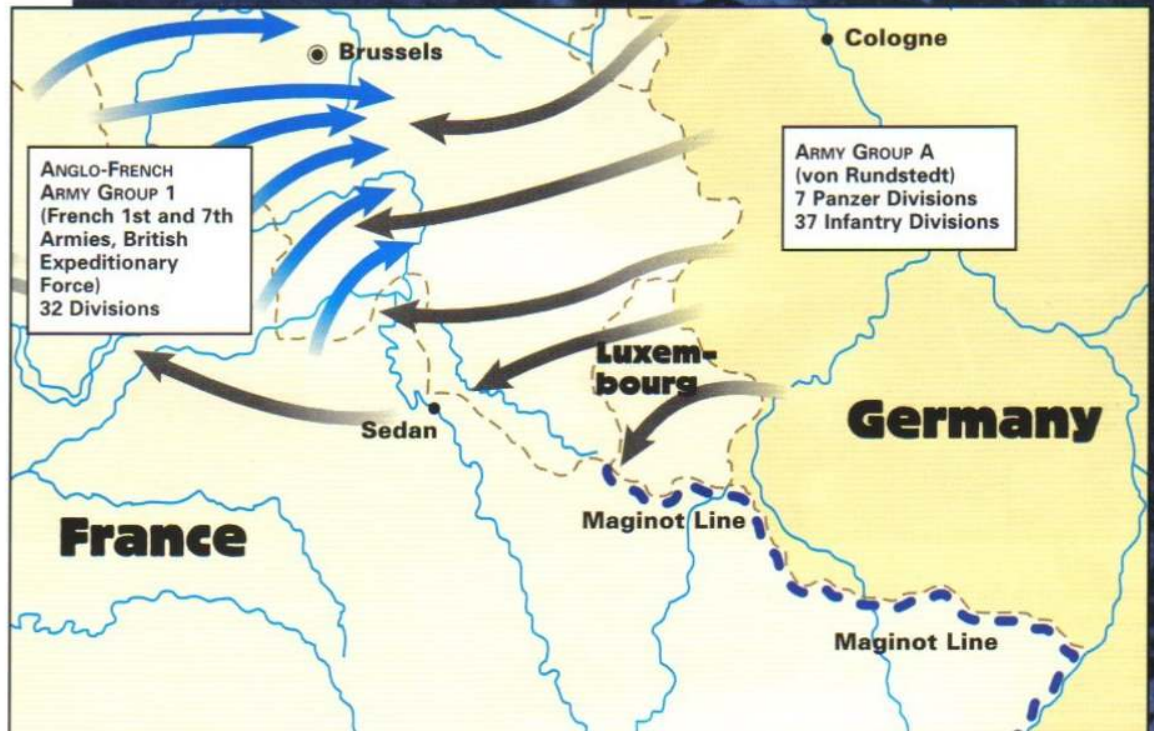
OFFENSIVE BEGINS

When the German offensive began on 10 May, the Allies followed their agreed strategy, pushing their best troops across the border to take up defensive positions along the river Dyle between Antwerp and Namur. However, the Ardennes front was not left unguarded: the French 9th army assembled along the Meuse river around Sedan.

Here, in 1870, the French Emperor Napoleon III had been decisively beaten by the Germans, going into captivity with his surviving soldiers while revolution broke out in Paris. The French commander-in-chief, 68-year old General Maurice Gamelin, expected German units to emerge from the Ardennes at

The Allies did not just outnumber the Germans. The majority of the French frontier was protected by an elaborate network of fortifications – the Maginot Line. Behind great fields of barbed wire and concrete anti-tank obstacles (known as dragon's teeth) lay an immensely strong chain of underground forts with heavy guns in retractable armoured turrets. Machine guns swept every approach, and the gunners were safe behind steel and reinforced concrete walls.

The Maginot Line seemed impregnable, but there was one major problem. The imposing fortifications stopped at the Belgian border. It had never been possible to get Belgian agreement to extend the fortifications into Belgium, yet it was politically unacceptable to continue them up to the coast, leaving Belgium outside the defences.



Left: The Maginot Line was the strongest defensive fortification ever built, a mass of steel and concrete with whole towns underground, manned by hundreds of thousands of French troops.



Right: The Germans proved that they were capable of dealing with modern concrete fortifications when they had to: this is one of the Belgian forts guarding the Albert canal. However, they simply bypassed the Maginot line, leaving a large part of the French army unharmed but completely impotent.



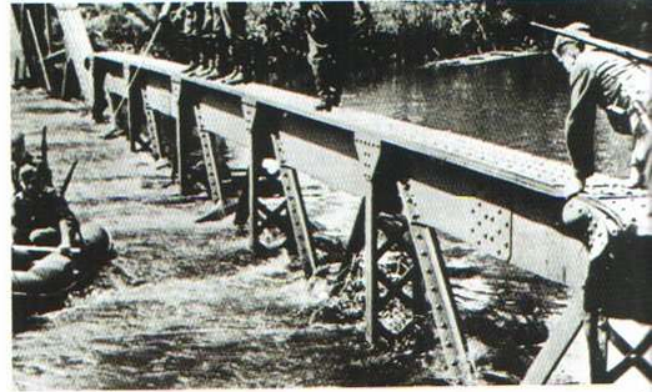
HITLER'S BATTLES 4



Left: The key point in the whole German attack came with the crossing of the River Meuse at Sedan. First across the river were assault pioneers, who immediately began setting up a ferry service.

Right above: Wehrmacht signals specialists string wire across a partially demolished bridge. The German's made extensive use of wireless in the front line, but as the infantry toiled in the wake of the fast-moving panzers they laid land lines for more reliable and more secure telephone communication.

Right: A motorbike reconnaissance unit is ferried across the Meuse. Soon the engineers will complete a pontoon bridge, and the panzers will start moving across.



some stage in the battle. But since he did not anticipate anything more than a light, probing force, the 9th Army was stretched more thinly than other French armies.

Once the attack was launched, German forces stormed across Holland and Belgium as the Allies expected, the imposing concrete and steel fortress at Eben Emael falling to a crack unit of paratroops who landed by glider right on the roof.

However, the forces under General von Bock – 30 infantry divisions of Army Group B – were actually a feint, designed to convince the Allies that the Germans were following the same old plan. The real punch came through the Ardennes, with the 44 divisions of von Runstedt's Army Group A, including 7 Panzer divisions under von Kleist.

Encountering little resistance from Belgian troops in the

Ardennes, the panzer divisions headed down the dirt roads in alarmingly dense columns. Military traffic police have seldom had a more decisive impact on a campaign: thousands of vehicles kept to schedule and by the evening of 12 May, German spearheads had reached the river Meuse.

The French infantry divisions around Sedan were mostly reserve formations, with only a handful of regular officers or

NCOs and the ordinary soldiers had received very little training. There were some five French cavalry divisions – reconnaissance units that included light tanks and motorised infantry as well as mounted troops – in the way, but they could not stop the German assault. Hammered by professional armoured forces, mostly combat veterans of the Polish campaign, the French formations disintegrated.

On 13 May, Guderian's infantry paddled across the Meuse in rubber dinghies while the French defences were pulverized by 300 twin-engine bombers and 200 Stukas. The dive-bombers attacked with particular accuracy, knocking out key French gun positions. The foot soldiers were across by 3.00 pm. Combat engineers had



Left: Smaller and less heavily armoured than the heaviest Allied tanks, the German Panzer IV could still pack quite a punch with its short-barrelled 75-mm cannon. However, its main advantage was that it was more mobile than British and French heavy tanks.

The Fighter War

Control of the skies

The Luftwaffe fought over Poland with very little opposition, and their confidence was sky high. The pilots knew that they flew the best planes in the world, and no other nation had such finely trained aircrew. Yet although they knew that attacking France would be a very different proposition, their confidence remained high. Success in the air war depends upon winning control of the air, and the Messerschmitt Bf 109 was just the aircraft to give the Luftwaffe that control.

Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3

The Bf 109 served with 7. Staffel, part of II Gruppe, Jagdgeschwader 2 'Richthofen'. Armament was heavy for the time: two or three 20-mm cannon and two fast-firing 7.92-mm machine guns.

Messerschmitt Bf 110C

Fast and very powerfully armed, the Bf 110C was designed as a Zerstörer or long-range heavy fighter. It proved reasonably effective during the French campaign; it was not until the Battle of Britain that its crews learned that it was no match for a high-performance single-engined fighter like the Spitfire or the Hurricane.



Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3

The standard German fighter at the outbreak of war, the Bf 109 had been combat tested in Spain and Poland before being unleashed in the skies over France. The 'E' model was faster than any Allied fighter with the possible exception of the British Spitfire, but there were no Spitfires in France.

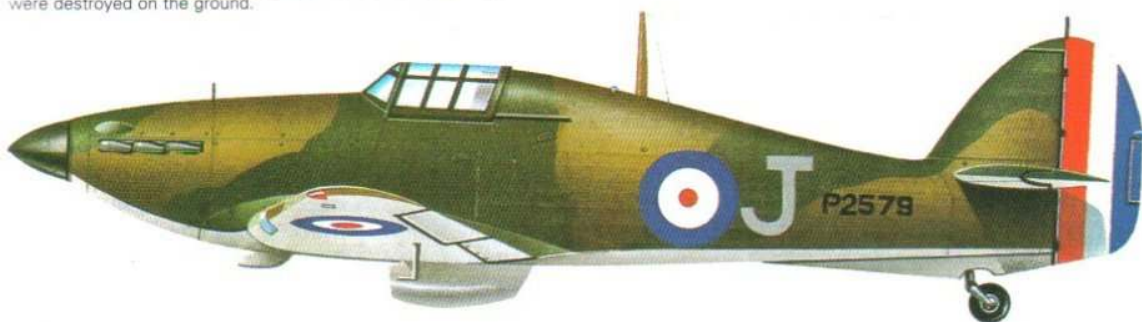


Gloster Gladiator

Last of Britain's front-line biplane fighters, the Gladiator was obsolete by the start of World War II. It saw considerable combat where its agility and toughness were evident, though it was no match for the Bf 109. Gladiators served with a number of air forces. This example was flown by 1^{ère} Escadrille 'La Comète', 2^e Regiment, Aeronautique Militaire in Belgium, and was based at Diest-Schaffen during the German invasion.

Morane Saulnier MS.406

The backbone of French fighter strength with around 300 aircraft serviceable in May 1940, the MS.406 was considerably less capable than the Bf 109. A good pilot could still achieve success, but its true worth can best be assessed by the fact that during the Battle of France 150 were lost in combat and another 100 were destroyed on the ground.



Hawker Hurricane Mark I

Flown by two RAF squadrons supporting the British Expeditionary Force, the Hawker Hurricane was slower than the Bf 109, but could turn more quickly. Its eight .303-in calibre machine-guns poured out a lot of ammunition, but they lacked the ultimate punch of the cannon-armed French and German fighters.



Above: Major General Erwin Rommell, former military aide to Hitler, commanded the 7th Panzer Division. A hero of World War I, Rommell proved to be a master of mobile tactics, and could improvise when necessary to get the job done.



Left: General Gamelin, the French commander in Chief, was an old man. Poorly served by his subordinates, and with little of the energy needed to keep a grip on modern warfare, he could not deal with the fast-moving German panzers.

Below: General Guderian's panzers reached the Channel coast on 20 May, 10 days after the start of the offensive. The BEF and many of the best French troops were now trapped in a pocket around Dunkirk.



a ferry operational in an hour, and by 4.30 a bridge was in place and the tanks could cross to the far bank.

LITTLE RESISTANCE

French counter-attacks came too little and too late. All the first-line troops had been committed to the northern flank. The Allies' strategy unravelled as the panzer divisions fanned out, racing ahead of their infantry and threatening to cut off the British and French armies in Belgium.

The Germans were vulnerable to a determined counter-attack, but the only one which threatened the speeding Panzers was by British tanks at Arras on 21 May. Five British brigades managed to inflict a stinging reverse on the SS *Totenkopf* division, but they were forced back after the commander of the 7th Panzer Division – Major-General Erwin Rommell – used his 88-mm anti-tank guns to engage the otherwise invulnerable British infantry tanks.

Gamelin ordered a retreat – without telling the British. The scale of the catastrophe suddenly became apparent and the French government prepared to evacuate Paris. With political will equally paralysed in London – Winston Churchill had only just replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister – it was left to Lord Gort VC, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, to choose between abandoning the French or hazarding most of Britain's tiny regular army in a last attempt to salvage the situation.

BRITISH CUT OFF

Meanwhile, Guderian's Panzers had reached the coast, and Gort chose to withdraw the BEF to Dunkirk. Trapped in an ever-decreasing pocket, it seemed only a matter of time before the British were annihilated. But then fate stepped in. The Führer ordered his panzers to stop, allowing the British a breathing space in which a fleet of civilian boats helped the Royal Navy

evacuate over 338,000 soldiers, including 100,000 Frenchmen, in nine days. The 'Stop Order' may have been to allow Hermann Goring to make good on his boast that the Luftwaffe could finish the job. In the event, the Germans met with stiff resistance from the Spitfires and Hurricanes of the RAF, and in spite of some successes were never able to seriously impede the evacuation.

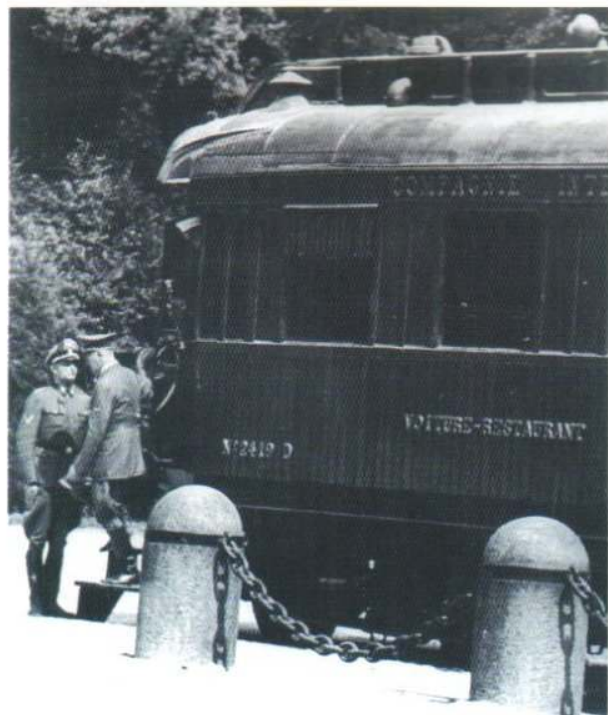
FRANCE FALLS

The miracle of Dunkirk kept Britain in the war. However, there was no hope for France, who had replaced the ageing Gamelin with the even older General Weygand. In spite of stiffening resistance in places, the Panzers turned west, moving with incredible speed to secure the Atlantic coast. Others sped south, completely bypassing the Maginot line, leaving more than 400,000 French troops bewildered and demoralised in their suddenly useless fortifications.

On 16 June, prime minister Reynaud resigned, and was succeeded by Marshal Philippe Pétain. Almost the first act of the ancient hero of Verdun was to ask the Germans for armistice terms. By 20 June, Italy had declared war on France (though Mussolini's troops seemed reluctant to push too far into the south of France) while German troops had reached the Swiss border in the east, Lyon and Grenoble in the South and controlled the Biscay coast as far south as Royan.

To complete the humiliation of France, Hitler insisted on signing the one-sided armistice in the same railway carriage at Compiègne which had seen Germany's surrender in 1918.

In a few short weeks, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France had surrendered to Germany. Only Britain remained to oppose Hitler as master of Europe, and it was towards the British Isles that Hitler was to turn his attention next.



Left: Adolf Hitler steps out of the railway carriage at Compiègne where France has been forced to sign a humiliating armistice. Only Britain was left for him to conquer.

Above: The French collapse was due to the paralysis and fear caused by German panzer tactics. Many of the poorly-trained French conscripts surrendered without a fight.

Below: Panzer crews add insult to injury by riding captured French Somua medium tanks – better than most German tanks – in the Wehrmacht's victory parade down the Champs Elysees.



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



MASCHINENGWEHR MG34/42

The German army's standard general purpose machine-guns during World War II are amongst the most influential infantry small arms of all time.

GERMANY produced many advanced weapons during World War II. Some were successful, some were unreliable, and some were a little too advanced for their own good. But a few German weapons were so good that they changed the face of warfare, and would influence weapons development all over the world for decades after Germany's defeat. Among their number were the MG34 machine-gun, and its successor the MG 42.

The first crude machine-guns were introduced in the 1860s, but they only came to dominate the battlefield during the First World War. By the time World War II broke out, machine-guns in most armies came in a variety of forms.

TYPES OF MG

There were light machine-guns, sometimes little more than automatic rifles: equipped with bipods and generally magazine fed, they were carried and used by infantrymen to provide their own extra firepower.

Then there were medium machine-guns: heavy, often water cooled, and mounted on massive tripods or mountings. These were used to lay down fire in the classic World War I manner: hosing out immense

A German infantry machine-gun team moves through a cornfield in the Ukraine during the summer of 1941. The MG 34 general purpose weapon they carried had no real equivalent in other armies.

quantities of lead for long periods of time. Heavy machine-guns were also support weapons, operating over greater range and with greater penetration, but were even more unwieldy.

The Wehrmacht was different. In the MG34 the Germans had produced the first general-purpose machine-gun, a weapon which could do just about anything. Fitted with a bipod, it could be used as a light machine-gun by infantry in the assault. Mounted on the *MG-Lafatte*, a tripod with a periscope sight, it could be used in defence in the sustained fire role. When the gun fired the recoil moved the gun on the mount so that it automatically swept a beaten zone with fire. The tripod was designed so that the gunner could fire the weapon from below the parapet of the trench - either by using a grip handle which had a mechanical linkage

Below: A German infantry MG 34 team engages Soviet forces holed up in the Red October tractor factory at the height of the Battle of Stalingrad.

Right: On a tripod, the MG 34 was capable of laying down vast amounts of suppressive fire, like the water-cooled weapons used by the Allies.



Above: On a bipod, the MG 34 could be used as a light machine gun for infantry support. This example has a 75-round magazine.

to the trigger - or simply by pulling a cord fixed to the grip. Other mountings included twin and triple for AA use and with a heavier barrel sleeve and a ball mounting it was installed in tanks.

The MG34 was air cooled, doing away with the clumsy water cooling systems which had formerly prevented the barrel from melting under sustained fire. To prevent overheating, it was fitted with a quick-change barrel - MG crews always carried one or more spare barrels. It fired a 7.92 mm round

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



from a 50-round non disintegrating metal belt. As defensive armament in bombers it used 75-round saddle magazines.

With a bipod the MG34 weighed around 12 kg loaded and 31 kg on its tripod. It was 1219 mm long, with a barrel length of 627 mm. The muzzle velocity was 755 metres a second. The maximum effective or combat range was 2,000 metres and the MG34 had a cyclic rate of fire of 800 to 900 rounds per minute.

The chief drawback of the gun was that it was built to very high standards, mostly with components machined or turned from solid billets of steel. This meant that it was labour intensive and very expensive to produce.

The expansion of the war into Russia saw a huge increase in demand for machine-guns. A team of engineers headed by Dr Grunow, a successful industrialist, was tasked with finding ways of speeding up production of the MG34.

The result was the classic

Left: The angular, pressed-steel form of the MG 42 makes it easily identifiable compared to its more expensive MG 34 ancestor. The newer weapon was less temperamental when used in extreme weather.

MG42, one of the most influential firearms in history. It used plastic in the butt and pistol grip and stamped and diecast metal components instead of expensive machined steel. In place of riveted or screwed joints spot welding was used. When Allied intelligence officers evaluated captured MG42s they assumed that these changes were the result of pressure on the German munitions industry. They did not at first realise that it was a conscious design decision which had so simplified manufacture that machine-guns could be produced at a much greater rate, even with a semi-skilled workforce.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE

The MG42 incorporated lessons hard-won in combat on the Eastern Front. Both the cocking handle and the catch for the top cover to the working parts were designed so that the gunner could operate them wearing mitts – or with a stick or rod. This was vital in the sub-zero Russian winters where contact by bare flesh on cold metal could cause severe injury. The MG42 also functioned well in other climates; dust and dirt in North Africa and Italy was less likely to jam the MG42 than the more temperamental MG34.

Maschinengewehr MG42

Recoil Booster: Designed to trap muzzle gases and increase the weapon's recoil.

Front sight: The MG 42 was fitted with conventional iron sights for use in the light machine-gun role.

Barrel: The MG 42's quick release barrel could be changed by an experienced gunner in five or six seconds.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS MG 34

Type: General purpose machine-gun
Calibre: 7.92 x 57 mm Mauser (0.31-in);
Length: 1219mm
Barrel: length 627 mm; 4 grooves, right-hand twist
Weight: 12.1 kg with bipod; 36kg with Lafette 34 tripod

Muzzle velocity: 755 m/sec
Rate of fire, cyclic: 800-900 rounds/min
Effective range: 800 metres direct fire; 2000-3000 metres indirect fire
Ammunition feed: 75-round saddle drum magazine or 50-round belt (usually clipped in fives to give 250 rounds)
Unit cost: 327 RM (727 RM including tripod)

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS MG 42

Type: General-purpose machine-gun
Calibre: 7.92 x 57 mm Mauser (0.31-in);
Length: 1220mm
Barrel: length 533 mm; 4 grooves, right-hand twist
Weight: 11.5 kg with bipod; 32kg with Lafette 42 tripod

Muzzle velocity: 755 m/sec
Rate of fire, cyclic: 1200 rounds/min
Effective range: 500 metres direct fire; 3500 metres indirect fire
Ammunition feed: 50-round belt (usually clipped in fives to give 250 rounds)
Unit cost: 250 RM (c.550 including tripod)



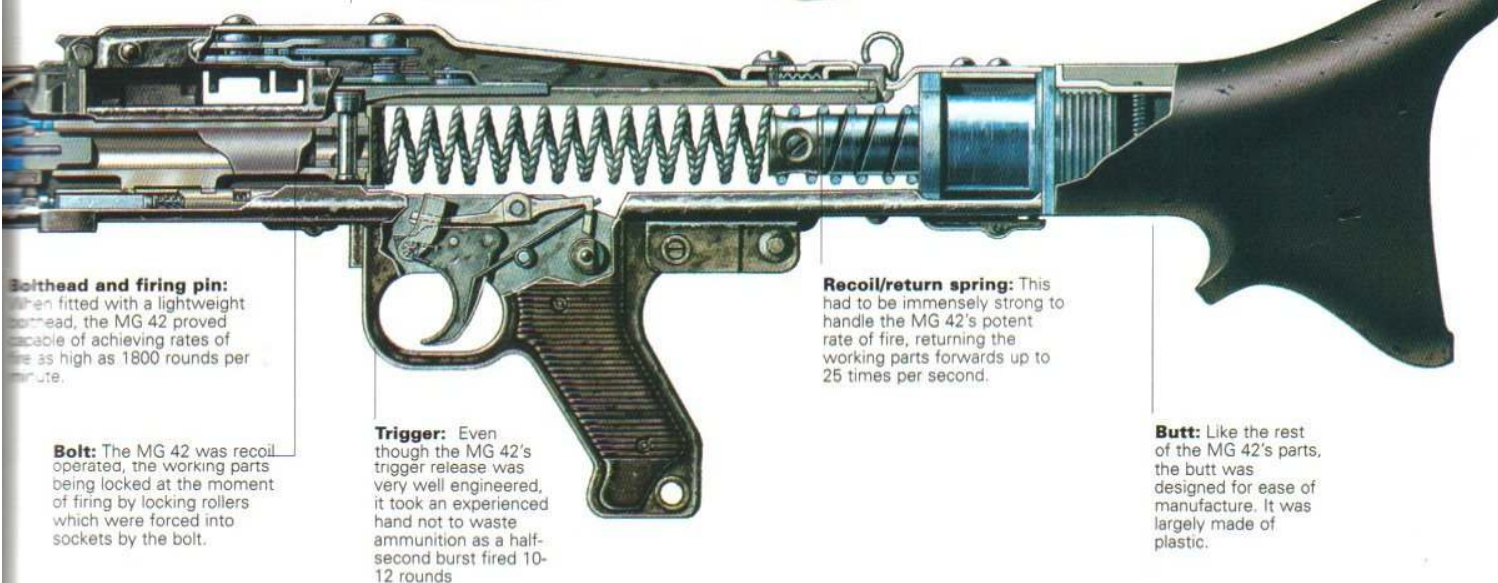
Left: An MG 34 mounted for the heavy machine-gun role on a Lafette 34 tripod, complete with indirect sights. The tripod was a solidly-machined piece of equipment – it cost as much to manufacture as the machine-gun itself! The two pads on the front leg of the tripod rested on the back of the man who carried it when folded for transport.

Right: An MG 42 in its light machine-gun guise, without the tripod and resting on the two legs of the weapon's permanently-attached bipod. The legs could be adjusted individually for length, so that the weapon could be used without any problems on uneven ground.



Left: An MG 42 mounted on a Lafette 42 tripod. As with the Lafette 34, the Lafette 42 had extending legs, which was a feature primarily designed to give ground clearance when the gun was used in the anti-aircraft role. At 20.5 kg, the Lafette 42 was about 3 kg lighter than its predecessor.

Belt-feed cover: The MG 42 did not have a magazine option like the MG 34: it could only fire the standard 50-round ammunition belts.



Bolthead and firing pin: When fitted with a lightweight bolthead, the MG 42 proved capable of achieving rates of fire as high as 1800 rounds per minute.

Bolt: The MG 42 was recoil operated, the working parts being locked at the moment of firing by locking rollers which were forced into sockets by the bolt.

Trigger: Even though the MG 42's trigger release was very well engineered, it took an experienced hand not to waste ammunition as a half-second burst fired 10-12 rounds.

Recoil/return spring: This had to be immensely strong to handle the MG 42's potent rate of fire, returning the working parts forwards up to 25 times per second.

Butt: Like the rest of the MG 42's parts, the butt was designed for ease of manufacture. It was largely made of plastic.

MG34 ORIGINS

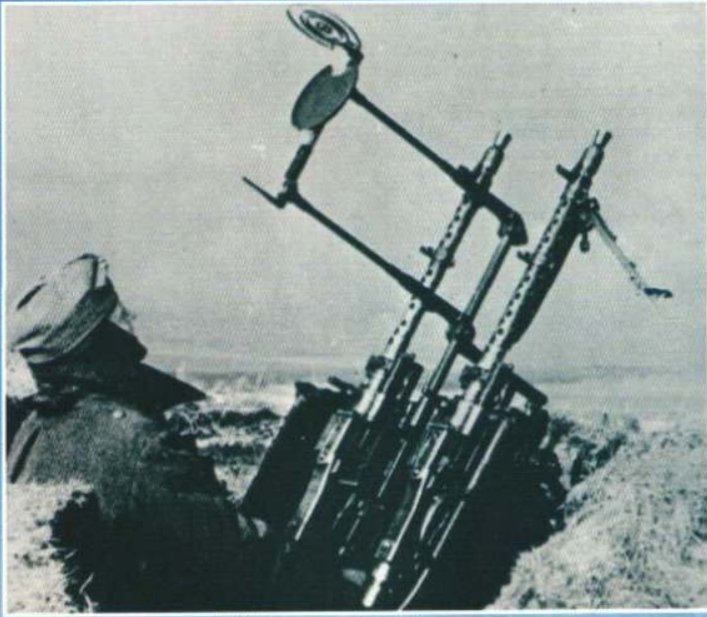
Design of the *Maschinen-gewehr* MG34 began at the Mauser plant at Obendorf in 1934. The weapon which entered service in 1936 was to change machine-gun design forever and with it infantry tactics. However it had a long gestation period dating back to 1919.

In that year *Rheinische Metallwaren und Maschinenfabrik* set up a subsidiary in Holland mainly to circumvent the Treaty of Versailles. This was followed in 1920 by a secret Russian 'front' company, and then in 1929 by the acquisition of the small Swiss firm of Solothurn.

The latter merger resulted in the 'Solothurn' MG30 of 1929, a box-magazine fed, air cooled machine-gun built to an extremely high standard, which remained in production until 1935.

The Mauser engineers used the MG30 as a starting point for their new weapon and the resulting gun, the MG34, incorporated many of the design features of the earlier machine-gun including the in-line mechanism and trigger arrangement and the rapid barrel change.

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Above: The ability to hose out ammunition made the MG 34 an effective short-range anti-aircraft weapon, especially on multiple mounts.

Below: In the sustained fire role the MG 42 usually operated with a three-man team of spotter, gunner and a loader to the left.

The MG42 was lighter and slightly more compact than its predecessor, but used the same operating principal of short recoil assisted by gas pressure from a muzzle booster. The muzzle velocity of the MG42 at 755 metres a second was the same as the MG34, but the most distinctive change was the rate of fire – the MG42 ripped through belted ammunition at a cyclic rate of 1,550 rounds a minute.

BARREL CHANGE

This high rate of fire heated up the barrel of the MG42 even more than the MG34, and so the quick change system was simplified. The gunner had only to reach forward of the working parts, push a retaining catch on the housing forward and the barrel swung out to the right. Taking care, because it was very hot, he then pulled it to the rear and it was free. To replace the new barrel he simply reversed the procedure. A trained machine-gunner could complete the whole process in under 30

seconds.

The high rate of fire could be reassuring to a nervous soldier, but the vibration it produced was a problem; the MG 42 was less accurate than the MG 34 on the bipod. Though soldiers were trained to fire short bursts, this was sometimes hard to remember in the heat of battle. Enthusiastic use of the weapon also got through a lot of rounds, which meant that the three-man crew needed to carry heavy loads of ammunition.

The snarling fire of an MG42 was unmistakable, often likened by Allied soldiers to the sound of tearing linoleum. One veteran recalled "the hysterical shriek of the MG42's furious rate of fire" ... "I remember my first reaction ... was one of amazement at the crushing fire power of these guns. It seemed to me that the German soldier seldom used his rifle. He was a carrier of boxes of light machine-gun ammunition of which they seemed to have an endless supply."





Above: Although the MG 42 was more crudely manufactured than its predecessor, it proved more reliable in harsh conditions. For this reason it was issued primarily to the infantry, while vehicle-mounted troops usually got the older weapon.

Below: Although the MG 42 was designed to fire only the standard 50-round ammunition belts, it was not difficult to modify it to accept the MG 34's 75-round saddle-drum magazine. The large round fore sight on this example is an anti-aircraft sight.

Right: The only problem with the MG 42 was that its prodigious rate of fire encouraged an equally prodigious use of ammunition. As a result, most members of German infantry squads would carry extra belts of rounds for the machine-gun.





PARTY COLOURS

The Nazi Party spread octopus-like tentacles through every aspect of German society. However, surprisingly few of the millions of Party members actually wore the NSDAP uniform.



Above: An unusually cheerful Adolf Hitler introduces Benito Mussolini to a Reichsleiter. The golden brown uniforms and gold-braided armbands gave rise to the 'Golden Pheasant' nickname by which senior NSDAP officials were known.

A

LL MEMBERS of the National Socialist German Workers Party wore Nazi insignia of one kind or another: all carried

Party membership books. But few of those millions of people actually wore the Nazi Party uniform: most were members of subordinate organisations, from the SS and the SA to the RAD and the Hitler Youth.

The wearing of specifically NSDAP uniforms was limited to members of *Das Korps der Politischen Leiter der NSDAP* – The Leadership Corps of the NSDAP. This was the organisation of Nazi party officials, who were divided into seven categories.

THE FÜHRER STATE

The **Führer** was the supreme leader who stood at the top of the party hierarchy. The **Reichsleiter** made up the Party Directorate (*Reichsleitung*). A number of these men, each of whom at some time controlled at least one office in the Party Directorate, were also the heads of party formations and of affiliated or supervised organisations of the party, or of agencies of the state, or held ministerial positions.

Beneath them came the *Hoheitsträger* – the ‘bearers of sovereignty’. The 40 or so **Gauleiters** each controlled a *Gau*, an area the size of a county. **Kreisleiters** were the political leaders of the largest subdivision of a *Gau*. **Ortsgruppenleiter** were responsible for several villages, a town or for part of a larger city, including from 1500 to 3000 households. **Zellenleiter** were the political leaders of a group of from 4 to 8 city blocks or of a corresponding grouping of households in the country. **Blockleiter**, the political leaders of from 40 to 60 households. Each of these *Hoheitsträger* was directly responsible to the next highest leader in the Nazi hierarchy. The Gauleiters were directly subordinate to the Führer himself.



The accoutrements of an NSDAP standard bearer. The eagle-and-swastika finial was of coin-quality nickel-silver, the gloves of finest white calfskin. The gorget or neckpiece was the largest worn with any uniform in the Third Reich. The red velvet and gold braid standard-bearer's bandolier seen here was probably used to carry the 'Alte Garde' flag, the standard behind which the 500 longest-serving party members marched each year.



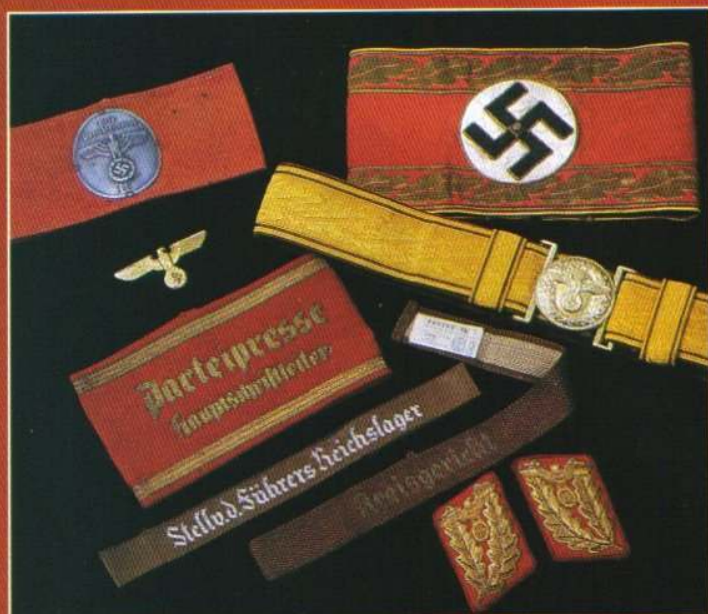
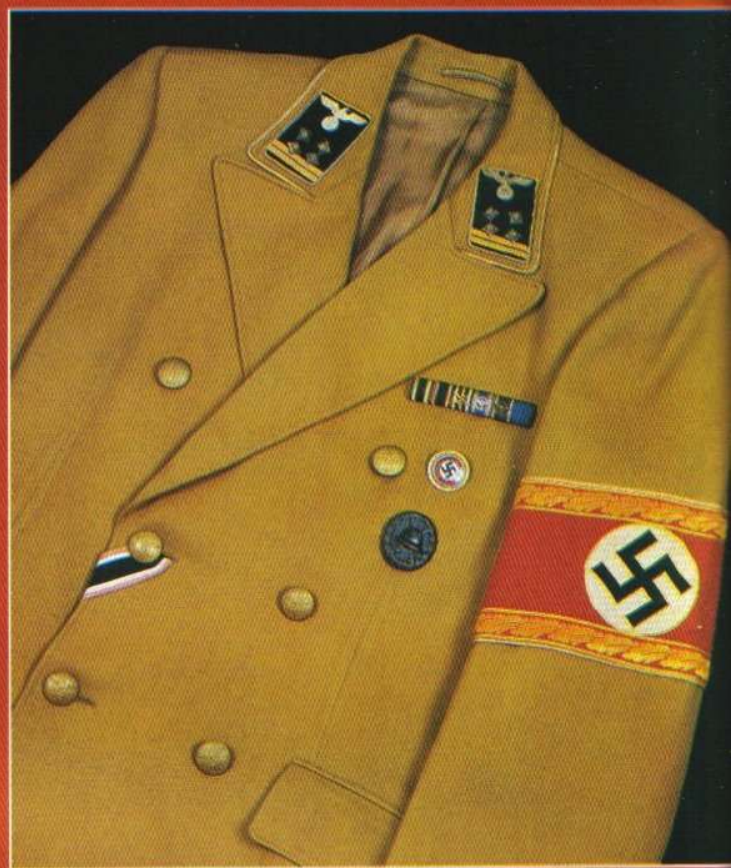
GOLDEN PHEASANTS OF THE NSDAP

While the Reichsleiter were concerned mainly with policy, the *Hoheitsträger*, from the Gauleiter down, were the face of the Party that ordinary citizens would see most often. The Gauleiter was the political leader of the largest subdivision of the State. He was charged by the Führer with political, cultural, and economic control over the life of the people, which he was to coordinate with the National Socialist ideology.

The Führer himself appointed all Gauleiter and Kreisleiter, all Reichsleiter, and all other political leaders within the Reichsleitung (Party Directorate) down to the grade of Gauamtsleiter, the head of a subdivision of the party organisation within a Gau.

The Hoheitsträger and Reichsleitung together constituted the powerful group of leaders by means of which the Nazi party reached into the lives of the people, consolidated its control over them, and compelled them to conform to the National Socialist pattern. For this purpose, broad powers were given them, including the right to call upon all party machinery to effectuate their plans. They could requisition the services of the SA and of the SS, as well as of the HJ and the NSKK.

Below: A group of party insignia. Anti-clockwise from top left they include: party photographer armband (metal plaque has photographer's official permit number); gold cap insignia (post 1938); NSDAP press, head editor's armband; cuffband worn by assistant to Reichsleiter; kreisgericht cuffband worn by legal official working in a town court; a Gauleiter's collar patches; a parade belt made from golden woven celluloid on a brown velvet backing; and a Reichsleiter's armband originally issued to Martin Bormann.





A Gauleiter's peaked cap, identifiable by the red piping and golden embroidered oakleaves; a Gauleiter's car pendant; and a hand-embroidered funeral sash.

Above left: A double-breasted walking-out tunic originally made for Kreis Hauptgemeinschaftsleiter de König who was based in what is now the Czech Republic.

Left: Tunic tailored in Italy for political leader Oswald Zöschg. Based at Merano, Italy Zöschg was a member of Ausland Organisation Ortsgruppe Italian, which acted as a liaison between the NSDAP and Mussolini's Blackshirts.

Right: Clockwise from top left – a Political Leader's NSDAP membership book; a citation for the Gold Party Badge; a cased pair of Gold Party Badges (large for uniform tunic, small for civilian lapel); cover of NSDAP membership book; 25/15/10-year long-service medals; cased Blood Order 2nd series (given to those who took part in the 1934 Austrian putsch. Centre, left to right: Sudetenland badge; NSDAP provisional membership card; Coburg badge for those who fought in an early party battle with the socialists.



A Z

OF THE THIRD REICH

Colditz

A medieval fortress on the river Mulde in Saxony which was used to house around 600 high category PoWs and other prisoners. These included a number of *Prominente* – officers related to the Royal Family or to prominent Allied politicians and military commanders.

Designated a *Sonderlager* (special camp) or *Straflager* (punishment camp), Colditz was intended to be escape-proof, but between 1939 and 1944 there

were 130 escape attempts, of which 30 were successful. Fourteen Frenchmen, nine British, six Dutch and one Pole successfully got away from the high-security facility. The camp was liberated by the Americans in 1945.

Right: The ancient fortress of Colditz in Saxony is now infamous for its role as a WWII prison camp.



Columbia Haus

Columbia House was one of the first and probably the worst and most infamous of the Gestapo prisons set up in Berlin when

Hitler became Chancellor on January 30, 1933. In its interrogation cells Communists, Social Democrats, Jews and

other enemies of the state were beaten and tortured before they were sent to concentration camps. Its use was discontinued

in 1936, when prisoners were taken directly to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Compiègne

The November 1918 Armistice which ended World War I was signed in a railway coach in the Forest of Compiègne, northeast of Paris. Following the defeat of France it was chosen by Hitler as the location for the surrender negotiations between France and Germany in June 1940. The coach was later taken to Berlin in a fund raising campaign but destroyed by an Allied air raid.

Right: Hitler and the senior officers of the German armed forces celebrate the triumph of the Battle of France. Once the rail car was taken away, the Germans blew up the site.

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 5: Hitler's early years

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 4: Battle of France



Concentration camps

The vast huddled camps where Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, Communists and other 'enemies' of the Nazis were incarcerated, worked to death or exterminated.

The first camps were established in 1933 as soon as Hitler came to power, primarily to house political opponents of the Nazis. The harsh routine in the early days became even more brutal, and the starvation, medical experiments and executions at these camps contributed to their high inmate death rate.

Concentration camps were built at Neuengamme, Ravensbruck, Bergen-Belsen, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Gross-Rosen, Flossenburg and

Dachau in Germany. As Germany expanded its control in Europe camps were built in occupied countries; at Mauthausen in Austria, Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, Natzweiler in Alsace, and Vught in the Netherlands.

In Poland the camps at Stutthof, Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Maidanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Belzec were extermination camps set up to kill and cremate in an operation

Right: Concentration camp inmates were incarcerated for as long as the Nazis wanted: many gave up the fight, deliberately crossing deadlines to be shot by the camp guards.



Concentration camps (continued)

which combined science and industry with the savagery of 'ethnic cleansing'. Inmates who had been spared the gas chambers and who worked as slave labourers were striped uniforms with numbers and distinctive insignia to indicate the nature of the "crime". Many were tattooed with their prison number on their forearm.

Each of the main camps had numerous sub-camps attached for administrative purposes, and many German companies played host to camps housing the slave labour used in their factories. By the end of the war, SS records indicated that there were at least 1,400 such camps, with an inmate population of around 700,000.

Recent research suggests that between 1933 and 1945 up to two million people were imprisoned in concentration camps, of whom one million died. The POW and extermination camps took in many millions more, with at least six million victims being killed – some estimates put the figure as high as 11 million.

See also Nazi Horrors

Issue 3: Gestapo

Issue 3: Dachau

See also The Holocaust

Issue 2: Auschwitz

Issue 7: Ghettoes

Right: The emaciated state of the hundreds of thousands of concentration camp inmates liberated by the Allies at the end of the war stood mute testament to the inhumanity of the concentration camp system.



Left: The camp orchestra at Auschwitz serenaded slave labourers out of the camp as they were worked to death in the factories and mines around the massive extermination, labour and concentration camp.

Concordat

The agreement signed with the Nazi Government in 1933 by Eugenio Pacelli, the Papal Secretary of State, former Papal Nuncio in Berlin and future Pope Pius XII.

In return for the assurance from Rome that it would not become involved with German politics, the Führer granted Catholics freedom to practise their own religion. The arrangement lasted until 1945.

Critics have suggested that the Vatican's silence over the Final Solution and other cases of the abuse of human rights in the Third Reich was the result of the Concordat.

Eugenio Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, signs the Concordat between the Nazis and the Roman Catholic Church, while Franz von Papen looks on. This would shadow the Pope's reputation in later years.



Condor Legion

A unit of the Luftwaffe initially under the command of the Minister of Aviation Major General Hugo Sperrle which supported the forces of General Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War.

The Condor Legion deployed in August 1936, but achieved little until the summer of 1937, though its attack on the Basque town of Guernica on 27 April, 1937 caused heavy civilian casualties and shocked the world.

The arrival of Heinkel He 111 and Dornier Do 17 bombers, Ju 87 Stuka dive bombers and Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters

proved decisive in the air war, and allowed the Luftwaffe to develop many of the close support tactics which would prove very effective in the early years of World War II.

Right: An early Heinkel He 111 in Spanish colours is loaded with bombs. The Condor Legion gained valuable combat experience in Spain.

See also Hitler's War Machine

Issue 10: Luftwaffe

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 1: Blitzkrieg Poland



Conti, Leonardo (1900-1945)

The Chief Physician of the Third Reich, Leonardo Conti was born in Lugano, Switzerland on 24 August, 1900. While studying medicine in Berlin he became an early member of the Nazi Party. In 1923 he became the first official SA physician in Berlin, and was responsible for building up the SA Sanitation Corps. He was also founder of the

NSArztebund – the National Socialist Doctors' League.

In 1939 Hitler appointed him Reichsgesundheitsführer or Reich Health Inspector. In this role he was responsible for condemning to death Germans who suffered from mental health problems. He was also heavily involved in the eugenics campaign designed to purify the Nordic race.

Conti rose to the rank of SS-Gruppenführer and was a member of the Reichstag. He survived the war but committed suicide while in prison in Nuremberg in 1945.

Right: Leonardo Conti wanted to control the health of all German people but his anti-beer stance made him unpopular.



Crystal Night (Kristallnacht)

Crystal Night or *Kristallnacht* took place on 9/10 November 1938. Organised by the SS and the Gestapo, and carried out by the SA and by ordinary Germans, it was a night of antisemitic riots which took place the length and breadth of Germany.

The ostensible cause of the rioting was the assassination in Paris of Ernst vom Rath, a German diplomat, by Herschel Grynszpan, a German Jew. Grynszpan had intended to kill the German ambassador in protest against the deportation of his parents to Poland along with 10,000 Jews. The tragic irony was that his victim vom Rath was

totally opposed to Nazism.

At a meeting of Party leaders on November 9, Dr Josef Goebbels announced the assassination and advised that the 'spontaneous' anti-Jewish demonstrations should not be discouraged. Heydrich instructed the police not to interfere – except where incendiary attacks on Synagogues by rioters threatened other buildings – and to arrest Jews.

After the pogrom had ended, Heydrich reported to Goering that 74 Jews had been killed, 20,000 arrested, 815 shops and 171 homes destroyed, and 191 synagogues set on fire.



Above: Shattered windows in a Jewish-owned store litter the pavement. Scenes like this were repeated all over Germany, as a Gestapo-inspired pogrom was unleashed against Jewish property.

Dachau

Set up by the SS in 1933. Along with Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen it was to form the nucleus of the wartime concentration camp system. It was described as a 'school for good citizenship', and the Nazis could vouch for this by the fact that in the November 1933 elections, 2,154 of the 2,242 inmates voted for the Nazi government.

Dachau became notorious for medical experiments. In 1941 and 1942 over 500 operations were performed on healthy inmates – which included captured US Army Air Corps air crew. Among the experiments carried out were infection with malaria and cold water immersion and decompression.

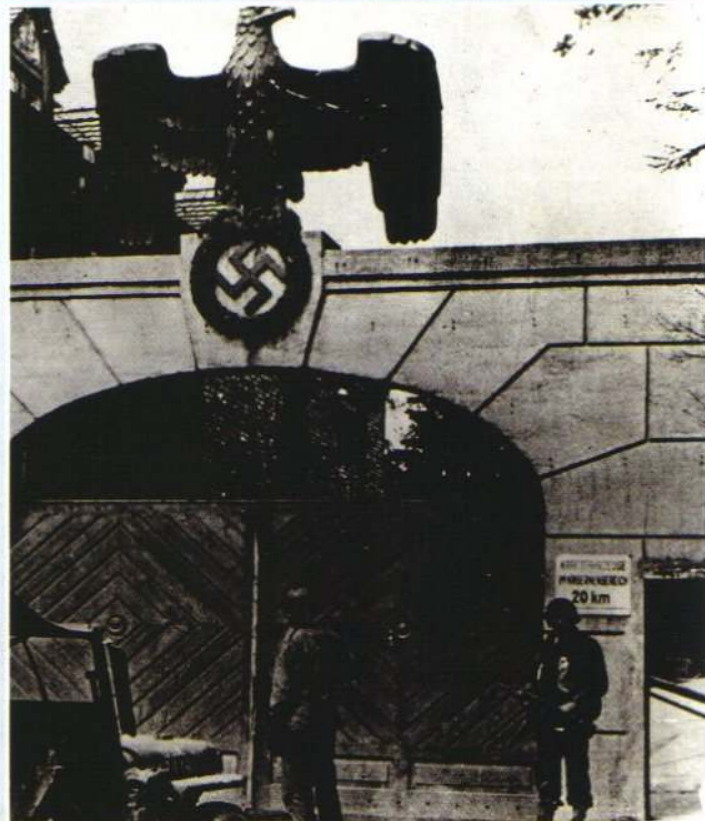
In 1942 a gallows was constructed and furnaces built to dispose of corpses. Among the eminent prisoners held at Dachau were the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg, Pastor Martin Niemöller, former French Premier Leon Blum, General Halder and Hjalmar Schacht.

The camp was liberated in 1945 by the US Army. Enraged by the



Right and above: The main gate at Dachau led into one of the earliest of all concentration camps. It was at Dachau where most of the Totenkopfverbände or camp guards learned their trade. To be an inmate at such a camp was to lose all rights: you were property, for the Nazi Party to dispose of as it saw fit.

the thousands of corpses and the emaciated state of the inmates, the GIs summarily executed many of the SS prison guards.



Darré, Richard-Walther (1895 - 1953)

The man who would become the race and agricultural expert of the Third Reich was born in Belgrano, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1911 he spent a year at a school in Wimbledon, London as an exchange student. During World War I he served as Lieutenant in the artillery. After the war he became joined a Freikorps, and then became a member of the NSDAP.

Called to head the organisation of German farmers in April 1933,

he was appointed *Reichsbauernführer* (Reich Agricultural Leader) and *Reichsernährungsminister* (Reich Minister for Food and Nutrition).

He was best known as a prolific writer on race and was a firm believer in the virtues of the Nordic peasant stock. As a result, Himmler appointed Darré chief of the *Rass-und Siedlungshauptamt* (The Central Office for Race and Settlements), with the rank of SS-Gruppenführer.

Found guilty of large-scale black market food deals, he was dismissed in 1942. Captured in 1945 he served five years imprisonment and died in Munich in September 1953 of a liver disease.

Right: Argentine-born Richard-Walther Darré controlled the race and resettlement office of the SS. This evicted landowners in conquered territories, resettling German farmers in their place.



Dawes Plan

A report prepared by American Charles G. Dawes in 1924. It held Germany responsible, "for causing all the loss and damage"

of World War I and introduced a reparation plan which confirmed the harsh measures imposed by the Allies at Versailles.

Resentment of the Dawes Plan was a contributory factor to the rise of the Nazis, since it set no limit on reparations and so

Germans feared that they would have to keep making unlimited payments to the rest of the world for an indefinite period.

Degrelle, Leon. (1906 -1996)

Belgian fascist who as manager of a small publishing firm in Louvain in 1930 founded the Rex Party, a fascist organisation. Based on the Italian Fascist movement it enjoyed electoral success in 1936 but was defeated by tactical voting in 1937.

After the German occupation in 1940 Degrelle's fortunes changed. He joined the Volunteer Assault Brigade Wallonien as an ordinary soldier. This was a unit of the Waffen SS, composed of French-speaking Belgians.

Degrelle distinguished himself

in combat, and as an SS-Hauptsturmführer took command of the brigade which by now formed part of the SS PanzerDivision 'Wiking'. Of the original 850 men who volunteered for Wallonien only three survived three years of fighting in Russia.

Degrelle escaped to Argentina after the war, then moved to Spain. In a TV interview in 1973 he said, "I am only sorry I didn't succeed, but if I had the chance, I would do it all again, but much more forcefully".

Rexist leader Leon Degrelle originally achieved some electoral success in the French-speaking part of Belgium, but Fascism never really took hold in the country. He went on to become one of the most decorated officers in the Waffen SS.

See also Inside the Third Reich
Issue 6: Hitler's foreign followers
See also Hitler's War Machine
Issue 8: Waffen SS



Denazification

The process adopted by the Allies in western zones of Germany to establish the degree of involvement of German citizens in the political activity and war

crimes. Those under investigation were divided into categories, including: *Hauptschuldige* (Major offender); *Belastete* (incriminated – a militarist involved in war

crimes, or a profiteer); *Mindebelastete* (a lesser offender, such as a Party member not known to have committed crimes); *Mitlaufer* (fellow-traveller

– someone who joined the party out of expediency) and finally *Entlastete* (exonerated – an innocent or proven anti-Nazi).

Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

The German Workers' Party was a small political group affiliated to the influential right-wing Thule Society which was set up in Munich. Thule members tended to be middle-class, and founder Rudolf von Sebattendorf wanted to spread its *volkisch* anti-communist message among the working classes. He encouraged journalist Karl Harrer and toolmaker Anton Drexler to form the *Politische Arbeiterzirkel* (Political Worker's Circle) in October 1918.

On 5 January 1919 it was renamed the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, and held its first meeting at the Fürstenfelder-Hof. Infiltrated by an army spy called Adolf Hitler later that year, it would become the foundation of the Nazi Party.

Right: Anton Drexler (in glasses) was one of the founders of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei. His homespun right-wing Germanic philosophy found a ready listener in Adolf Hitler.



A Z OF THE THIRD REICH

Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF)

Hitler's rise to power had been connived with by a number of Trades Unions, who felt that by supporting the Nazis they were ensuring their own survival in a Nazi state. However, during the May Day celebrations in 1933, while most workers were celebrating, SA stormtroopers assaulted union offices all over Germany, seizing property and assets on behalf of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* or DAF. The next day, senior trade union officials were arrested and imprisoned.

The DAF – German Labour Front – was the controlling organisation for labour in Nazi Germany. Robert Ley, a former WWI pilot, led the Labour Front

from its foundations to the end of the war. At its peak the DAF controlled 20 million workers and had a huge budget, owning extensive property in its own right. A subsidiary organisation was *Kraft Durch Freude* (Strength Through Joy) which organised paid vacations, ran holiday camps and cruise ships and attempted to improve the work environment.

Right: Doctor Robert Ley, seen here with Rudolf Hess, had been a senior chemist with IG Farben before becoming head of the DAF. Ley saw to it that the DAF absorbed all free trade unions.



Deutsche Blick

Der deutsche Blick or the 'German Glance' was an exaggerated yet furtive look over the shoulder to check that nobody was listening. It

invariably preceded the telling of an anti-Nazi joke or story. It was supposed to be a piece of humour, but in a country where to be caught telling jokes about

the Führer could mean death, making sure that the Gestapo was nowhere around was a simple matter of survival. The name was a play on the 'German

Greeting', the official term for the Hitler salute. It is said that the *deutsche Blick* originated in the working class district of Wedding in Berlin.

"Deutschland Erwache"

'Germany Awake' was one of the most important Nazi slogans in the 1920s and 1930s. Its most prominent use was on the Feldzeichen or banners of the SA and the SS.

The slogan was coined to suggest the need to awaken from the sleep of the Weimar Republic. Probably derived from

Right: Flag bearers parade through the streets of Nuremberg. Their Feldzeichen (Battlefield Standards) bear the legend Deutschland Erwache – 'Germany Awake!'

Richard Wagner, Deutschland Erwache became the title for a marching song.



Dietrich, Josef "Sepp" (1892 - 1966)

Hitler's driver and bodyguard, who rose from street thug to command a Panzer corps. Dietrich was a butcher by trade who achieved the rank of Sergeant Major in World War I.

He was an early member of the NSDAP, and took part in the Munich Putsch of 1923. In 1933, he formed the Führer's 120-strong SS bodyguard, to which Hitler gave the title *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler*. Dietrich and the *Leibstandarte* played a major part in the Night of the Long Knives, the purge which saw the emasculation of the SA and the beginning of the rise to power of the SS.

By the beginning of World War II the bodyguard under Dietrich's command had become a fighting regiment which was the

foundation of the Armed or Waffen SS. It saw action on most of the major fronts in World War II, evolving into a fully-fledged Panzer division. By 1945, Dietrich was commanding three divisions as the 1st SS Panzer Corps.

Dietrich was tried for war crimes committed by units under his command. He served ten years of a 25 year sentence handed down at Nuremberg, and a further 18 months for his part in the 1934 Blood Purge. He died a free man at Ludwigsburg on April 21, 1966.

Right: Sepp Dietrich confers with Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt late in 1944, just before the Battle of the Bulge. Dietrich was a fighter, but he lacked much in the way of strategic ability.



COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler the military leader:
Genius or fool?



THE HOLOCAUST

Massacre
at Babi Yar



HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Albert Speer
Josef Goebbels

HITLER'S BATTLES 5

The Battle of Britain

INSIDE THE REICH

Hitler Youth:
Creating a Nazi Future



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Assault Artillery
Messerschmitt Bf 109
Battleships

NAZI HORRORS

Night of the Long Knives:
How rivalry within the Nazi
Party was settled by murder

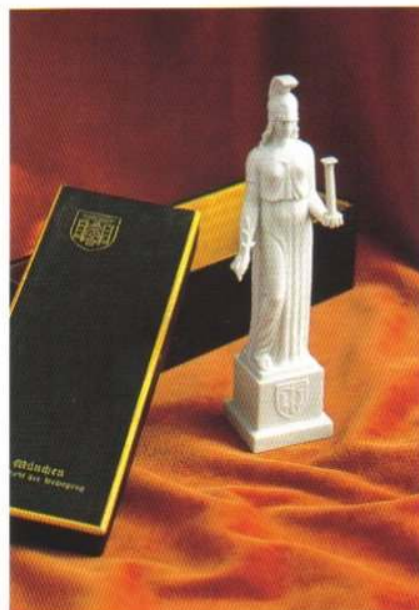


NAZI SYMBOLS

Uniforms and Badges
of the Panzer troops

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Art under the Nazis



A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

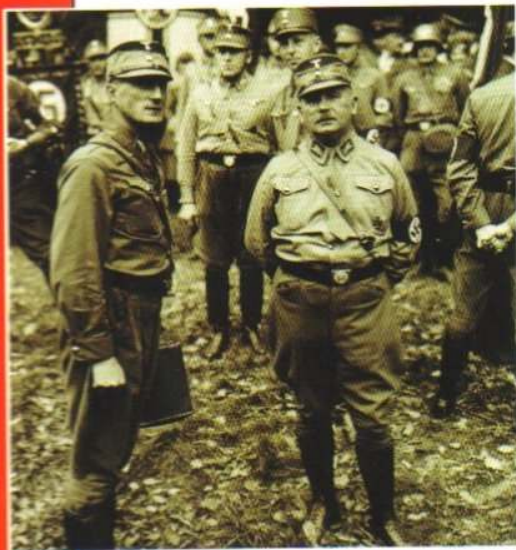
IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**

SECRET HITLER FILES

Could Hitler's erratic behaviour have been due to the quack doctors who pandered to his hypochondria?

NAZI HORRORS

The Night of the Long Knives: Hitler's consolidation of power was completed by a night of murder, when old friends were eliminated and old scores were settled.



INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Heinrich Himmler was the most enigmatic of Hitler's followers: a bespectacled bureaucrat who wielded enormous power, and who put the 'Final Solution' into action.

HITLER'S BATTLES

The Allies expected the Germans to attack France in the same way as they had in 1914. But Hitler and his generals had other plans: in less than a month France was defeated and Britain left to fight on alone.



INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

The Reichsarbeitsdienst was the army of uniformed labourers celebrated in the classic film 'Triumph of the Will'



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

The MG 42 machine-gun used by the German army during World War II was one of the most influential firearms of all time.